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POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN A SCHOOL DISTRICT

Linda LaRocque
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C., Canada
V5A 1S6

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the process of policy implementation in a school district, focusing especially on implementation activities at the school level and the influence of the school board and the central office on these activities. A case study approach that involved interviews, observations, and document analysis was adopted. The district's community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies were the two selected for the study.

Each of the three major conceptualizations of policy implementation illuminated different aspects of the findings, and described policy implementation from the perspective of a different set of actors. The classical or technological model, which corresponded to the perspective of the School Board members, accounted for the emphasis on policy development rather than on policy implementation and for the use of rational-empirical implementation strategies such as the dissemination of information and the holding of workshops. The political model, which corresponded to the perspective of the senior administrators and district employee groups, explained the resistance of district employee groups to the policy, their relationship to the Board and senior administrators, and their desire to control the policy process. The cultural or evolutionary model, which corresponded to the perspective of the school, accounted for the

school differences in policy implementation, the general resistance of school personnel to district policy, and the relative ineffectiveness of district implementation strategies.

A data-based model of policy implementation in a school district was derived from this latter perspective. Essentially it argues that the policy statement (i.e., the policy-as-adopted) and school practice with respect to the policy (i.e., the policy-in-practice) are distinct but interrelated entities. The policy statement does elicit a response from the schools and it does constrain the substantive nature of their response, but such school-based factors as the principal's leadership style, the balance between school-oriented and classroom-oriented teachers on the staff, and the extent to which the staff shares the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement are the most important determinants of school practice. The senior administrators influence school implementation activities directly, through the implementation strategies they utilize, and indirectly, through the central office- school linkages they establish. These linkages determine the state of preparedness of the schools for policy implementation, and thus of whether policy implementation is an integral part of school life or a disruption of its routines.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

WHY STUDY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION?

Problem Background and Rationale

What happens after a school board adopts a policy? How is it received, interpreted, and carried out by the schools in the district? Certainly policy making is one means, and a potentially powerful one, by which organizations can achieve coordination and control of the activities of their members -- which is one reason the policy making function of the school boards has received considerable attention over the last fifteen years. But policy is more than that, it is also a means by which elected officials can fulfill their representative function (Ingram, McCain, & Laney, 1980).

Only a small percentage of the public is involved actively in educational decision-making (Fullan, 1982; Mann, 1977); generally public interests are represented by the elected school board members. As Coleman (1974) says:

> The trustee has been entrusted with ensuring that the wishes of the community are a part of the complex of forces that commonly occur on a wide range of issues in public education ... the trustee derives legitimacy not from expertise but from both the institutional machinery of representation and in particular the purposive element of this concept. (p. 53)

The actual extent of school board responsiveness is, of course,

questionable, with some arguing that boards are coopted by district administrators (Zeigler & Jennings, 1974) and constrained by decisions made at higher levels of government (van Geel, 1976; Wirt & Kirst, 1975), and others, that they exert influence by circulating values and setting expectations that district administrators hesitate to violate (Boyd, 1975, 1976; Mitchell, 1980).

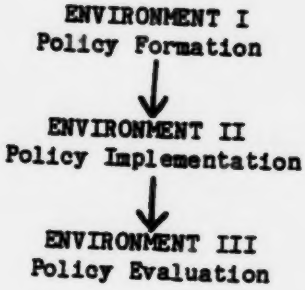
Regardless of the extent to which public values and expectations on a particular issue are expressed in a policy, however, this is only one facet of the lay control vs professional autonomy issue. The success of the policy, the extent to which its intent is achieved, depends on what happens during implementation, on what changes actually occur in the school district or schools. Bacharach suggests that school administrators are faced with two imperatives -- one administrative, the other political -- and that research has tended to consider each separately, resulting "in the growth of two separate bodies of literature, one focusing primarily on the school board, the superintendent, and the community, the other dealing with the school as an organization, primarily focusing on administrative relationships within the school" (p. 4). A study of policy implementation provides an opportunity (a) to examine another facet of the lay control vs professional autonomy issue, through the response of the professionals to the policy; and (b) to obtain a dynamic and integrated view of the school district, by focusing not only on activities at the school level, but also on the relationship between the central office and the schools and the ways in which this influences school activities.

According to Edwards and Sharkansky (1978), "Policy making does not end once a decision is made. The implementation of the decision can have just as great an impact on public policy as the decision itself" (p. 321). Important as implementation is to the success of a policy, our understanding of the process is only in the early stages of development -- it is "a terrain that is still fairly unexplored" (Rein & Rabinovitz, 1978, p. 307). Thus one reason for investigating policy implementation is to learn more about that aspect of the policy process that, until recently, has been relatively neglected both by practitioners and by researchers. For example, Mitchell's (1980) study of educational decision making by state legislators suggests that while legislators are sensitive to the complexity, uncertainty, and political nature of the policy making process, and while they are aware of the linkages between policy making and policy evaluation, they are less concerned with policy implementation. Researchers have recognized the political nature of policy making for some time (Lindblom, 1968), and there has been an increasing awareness of the political nature of policy evaluation (Sroufe, 1977; Wergin, 1976), yet when Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) wrote their book on implementation they could find little literature on the subject.

This apparent lack of interest in policy implementation until recent times has been attributed to the prevalence of what Nakamura and Smallwood (1980) have called the "classical" model of implementation and what others have referred to as the "technological" model (Berman, 1981; House, 1981; Wildavsky, 1979). This model is depicted in Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1

The Classical Model of Policy Implementation


ENVIRONMENT I
Policy Formation
ENVIRONMENT II
Policy Implementation
ENVIRONMENT III
Policy Evaluation

Source: Based on Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980, p. 24.

This model is based on several assumptions:

1. that the policy implementing systems or organizations are hierarchical. The policy makers are in a position of authority, and the policy implementers are subordinate to them. This also implies the existence of good communication linkages between the policy makers and the policy implementers, effective supervision of the implementation process, and compliance mechanisms.

2. that the activities of policy making and policy implementation are bounded and sequential. There is a clear division

of labour between the policy makers and the policy implementers, with the former first deciding on the goals and the means of achieving them, and the latter subsequently carrying out their instructions.

3. that both policy making and policy implementing are essentially rational and technical processes. Policy makers select the most appropriate means to achieve their goals, and then they communicate specific instructions to the policy implementers, who have been selected on the basis of their perceived ability to carry out these instructions. The policy implementers rely on their technical expertise to follow the policy guidelines as faithfully as possible.

Since Pressman and Wildavsky commented on the scarcity of studies of policy implementation, the number of such studies has grown rapidly. Their findings challenge the basic assumptions of the classical model and suggest that the political and cultural or evolutionary models (both of which are described in Chapter II) may be more appropriate in organizations which rely heavily on professionals to do the work. Most of these studies involve national policy and many of the policies concerned are non-educational in nature; however, there is little reason to expect policy implementation to be an hierarchical, bounded, sequential, rational, and technical process in a school district if it is not in other organizations which also depend primarily on the work of professionals.

The multitude of findings on policy implementation present a complicated and conflicting description of the process. According to

Berman (1981), who was referring to studies of educational change in general and not just of policy implementation,

> the state of the art at the level of specific findings and of practical advice appears to be in disarray. The past two decades' studies have indeed produced a multitude of findings, but the findings generally are not comparable ... the prevalence of contradictory findings only heightens this confusion. (p. 253)

Berman suggests that the inconsistency of findings reflects not so much methodological inadequacies as educational reality, the complexity of educational change and its context-dependent, time-dependent nature. He then argues that research should focus on providing conditional explanations of variation in educational outcomes.

Given the importance of the policy making function of school boards on the one hand and the complex and conflicting findings concerning policy implementation on the other hand, it is of some importance to have a better understanding of what happens when a policy has been adopted and of how the context influences implementation. Such information will, of course, be of value to those practitioners who must plan for and direct the policy implementation process. More important, it will have implications for theory, in a narrower sense by expanding conceptualizations of the policy process to include implementation and, in a broader sense, by contributing to knowledge about the politics of education through the study of political activity in an area of school life which has not often been explored from this perspective.

Problem Statement

The governance structure of public school systems is designed so that the school boards, which are generally elected representatives of the public and which are generally composed of non-educators, are responsible for policy making, while the professional staff, as employees of the boards, are responsible for policy implementation. This suggests the primacy of the legal imperative, or authority of office, and is consistent with the classical model of policy implementation. While this may describe the beliefs, and even actions, of people at the district level of organization, it is unlikely to be the case at the school level. These two sets of beliefs may come into conflict during policy implementation, with the likelihood of conflict increasing the more that the policy affects and attempts to control the work of the professionals.

The purpose of this study, then, is to investigate the process of policy implementation in a school district, focusing especially on implementation activities at the school level and the influence of the school board and the central office on these activities. More specifically, the boundaries of this study can be outlined in the form of five broad research questions, the rationale for which is given in Chapter II. The first three are related directly to the policy and its implementation:

1. What are the primary attributes of the policy? This refers to the invariant features of the policy which constrain the implementation process such as its complexity, specificity, and scope;

2. What decisions are made which bear directly on the implementation process? This refers in particular to the implementation strategies employed, but also to the conceptualizations of the nature of policy, policy implementation, implementer role, and policy maker-policy implementer relationship which influence these decisions; and

3. What are the endogenous attributes of the policy? This refers to the variable features of the policy which become known during the implementation process, and include the policy maker-policy implementer relationship, the values and interests of the various actors, implementer cooperation, implementer role, and the implementation process.

The remaining two questions concern the context in general:

4. What are the local contextual conditions? This refers to the characteristics of the community, the district, and the individual schools which might influence the implementation process; and

5. What external changes occur during the course of implementation? This refers to factors which originate outside the district or which are episodic in nature that might influence the implementation process.

Some Definitions

Most of the terms used in this dissertation are defined as they are encountered. The terms policy, policy implementation, policy maker, and policy implementer are used throughout, however, and so are defined at this point.

Policy is traditionally defined as a purposive course of action or a prescription for future action to deal with a problem or matter of concern that is formulated by the authorities in a political system, that is based on the ideals, values and interests of the system, and that may be in the form of standing plans, formal procedures, or guiding principles (Anderson, 1977; Coleman, 1980; Wergin, 1976). This definition is adopted for the purposes of the study, while the further stipulation that the policy be recognized formally as such in the participating district in order to ensure that it has been made known to the schools. According to the Superintendent of the participating district, this means that it has to be contained in their policy book.

Policy implementation is generally defined as the "carrying out" of the policy. In practice it is difficult to distinguish this process from the planning/mobilization process which precedes it and the institutionalization process which follows it (Berman, 1981). The approach adopted in this study is to examine those activities occurring in the schools which appear to be related to the policies under study, whatever stage of the change process they represent, and to try to trace their development in order to identify district-based and school-based influences on it.

Policy makers are those individuals who possess the formal authority and legitimacy to formulate policies, whether or not the policy initiative actually rests with them. In this study the members of the school board are the formal policy makers.

Policy implementers are those individuals whose work is affected by the policy and whose responsibility it is to carry out the policy. Often two types of implementers are distinguished, those who administer or oversee the implementation process -- the managers, and those who actually implement the policy -- the users (Common, 1980). In a school system, central office staff and principals may sometimes act as managers and other times as users, while teachers are generally users. In order to avoid confusion this report gives participants' position in the district rather than their role in the implementation process; the description of their activities makes clear their implementation role.

Research Design

The research method chosen is the case study, which allows both holistic treatment of a complex reality and depth of insight. It involves studying the implementation of two policies, the community relations policy and the elementary school self-assessment policy, in self-assessment policy, in one school district, called Lyttefield.[1] Data were collected: (a) from a variety of sources -- including school board members, central office staff, and principals and teachers, especially those of the four schools selected as study sites; (b) by a variety of methods -- including interviews, observations, document analysis, and a questionnaire; and (c) in a variety of situations -- including public and private meetings, offices, and staffrooms.

Lyttefield was chosen as the site for the study because (a) it is similar to other districts in its geographic region and to urban districts in other geographic regions in the province in terms of size, pupil-teacher ratio, average school size, per pupil cost, and administrative organization, all of which are factors traditionally considered in studies of implementation, and (b) it proved practicable to conduct the study there. The four schools were selected so that they differ in size, location, and the manner in which they implemented the two policies under study. They were judged by members of the central office staff to be typical of the schools in the district. In addition to originating at different levels of the school system (Ministry and school board), being substantial in nature, being adopted or revised recently, and being well-documented, the two policies were chosen because they are of interest to other districts as well as the participating one, that is, they deal with issues which face many, if not most, boards.

---

[1] All names used in this report, including those of the district and the schools as well as the respondents, are pseudonyms.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study is the lack of generalizability of the data, due to the small, nonrandom sample. Policy implementation is examined in only one district, or more accurately, in the central office and four schools of one district. In any study a balance must be struck between internal and external validity; in this study, the former is favoured. The decision was made intentionally, on the rationale that in an exploratory study such as this, the phenomenon under investigation must be examined in context and in depth.

However, in a recent study of implementation of teacher contracts (Johnson, 1981), it was found that differences between schools in the same district were greater than differences between districts. This has been reported in other implementation studies (e.g., the Rand studies). Thus limiting the study to one district may not seriously restrict the applicability of the findings to other districts, especially as the four study sites within the district were selected so that they differ in the ways they implemented the two policies being studied. This was done to maximize the information collected about policy implementation and the factors which influence it, a strategy used by others (Bacharach & Mitchell, 1981; Little, 1982).

Another limitation of this study is its duration. The Superintendent of Lyttefield asked that the major data collection component of the study be limited to six months. This was not a severe limitation, however, as implementation of the community relations policy was well underway by the start of this study, and implementation of the elementary school self-assessment policy was indefinitely postponed just after completion of the six month data collection period.

Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of nine chapters. In the introductory one I describe the problem, its background and rationale; define the key concepts of policy, policy implementation, policy maker, and policy implementer; provide an overview of the research design; and delineate the limitations of the study.

In the literature review which comprises the second chapter I establish the boundaries of the inquiry, that is, what should be included and what should be excluded from consideration. I describe the three major models of policy implementation and derives from them the features of the policy, of the environments of the policy makers and policy implementers, and of the relationship between policy makers and policy implementers to which particular attention should be paid.

Chapter III deals with the methodology. First I provide the rationale for adopting a naturalistic, case study approach. Then, because the use of the naturalistic paradigm, with the consequent heavy reliance on qualitative data, is still relatively new to educational research, I attempt to explain as thoroughly and as clearly as possible how the data collection and analysis were carried out and what steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

In Chapter IV I briefly introduce the community and the school district, and then describe the implementation activities carried out at the district level. The emphasis of the description is on the potential direct and indirect influence of these district activities on school level implementation.

I begin the fifth chapter with a brief introduction to the four participating schools. Then I describe the four components of the school's community relations programs, as defined by the respondents, and the performance of the school on each component.

In the sixth chapter I attempt to account for the differences among the community relations programs of the four schools in terms of (a) the extent to which the staffs share the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, and (b) the leadership style of the principals. I then provide support for the existence and importance of these school-based factors by reference to recent research findings.

In Chapter VII I describe the two distinct clusters of teacher attitudes and behaviours which emerge from the data and which might have a significant effect on policy implementation. I refer to other research in order to provide support for the existence of a "classroom-oriented" and a "school-oriented" teacher ethos and to suggest how teacher ethos may be related to school success.

In the eighth chapter I examine the relationship between the school's community relations programs and the district policy, using the five research questions posed earlier as a framework for analysis. Much of the discussion revolves around the leadership role of the district administrators and the appropriate division of responsibility between the central office staff and the school.

In the final chapter I examine the findings of the study from each of the three major perspectives of policy implementation, propose a model of policy implementation in a school district, and derive several propositions from the proposed model which can be tested in future research. In doing so, I attempt to resolve the dilemma that: (a) policy is practice, that is, policy is defined essentially by what principals and teachers actually do; and (b) policy implementation is more likely to lead to improvement when it is school-based and school-specific rather than uniform throughout all the schools in the district; yet (c) school boards have the responsibility of making policy which establishes common goals and expectations for all schools in the district and of ensuring that it is implemented by all the schools.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW:

ESTABLISHING THE STUDY BOUNDARIES

This study is conducted in the naturalistic paradigm, the rationale for which is provided in Chapter III. Researchers working in this paradigm are committed to the notion of grounded or emergent theory as opposed to entering the field with preconceived ideas and structuring the data so that it will conform to these preconceived ideas (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). On the other hand, there is a need for some sort of framework which sets boundaries on the data collection by indicating what to look for, where to look for it, and how to look for it. Many researchers turn to Malinowski's distinction between "foreshadowed problems" and "preconceived solutions" to resolve this issue:

> Good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with "preconceived ideas". If a man sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless. But the more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of molding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work. Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed in the observer by his theoretical studies. (Malinowski, 1922, pp. 8 & 9)

Thus the use of theory and previous research determine what to include and to exclude from consideration is frequently advocated (Lutz & Iannaccone, 1969; Miles, 1979; Mintzberg, 1979a; Smith, 1978; Wilson, 1977).

In this chapter I describe and compare the three major conceptualizations of policy implementation, and discuss their implications for research.

Conceptualizations of Policy Implementation

The classical or technological model, the political model, and the cultural or evolutionary model comprise the three major conceptualizations of policy implementation. They constitute different perspectives on, or "ways of seeing", the implementation process, and "act as interpretive frameworks for understanding" it (House, 1981). It is not so much that they attend to different dimensions of the implementation process but that they explain them differently and assign them different values (see Table 2-1). The following discussion of the three conceptualizations is based largely on Berman (1981), House (1981), Nakamura and Smallwood (1980), and Wildavsky (1979).

Classical or Technological Model

In the classical or technological model the relationship between policy makers and policy implementers is assumed to be hierarchical,

Table 2-1

Comparison of Three Models of Policy Implementation on a Variety of Dimensions

Dimensions	Model		
	Classical/ Technological	Political	Cultural/ Evolutionary
PM-PI relationship	superordinate-subordinate	balance of power	members of different subcultures
PM & PI values	shared	consensual	conflicting
PM & PI interests	common	different & conflicting	different & conflicting
PI cooperation	automatic	negotiated	problematic
PI role	passive consumption	power struggle	adaptation & clarification
Focal point	policy (characteristic & components)	policy in context (power relationships)	context (meanings, values & traditions)
Nature of policy	set of instructions	set of bargaining points	set of dispositions
Nature of policy implementation	- unfolding of plans - systematic & rational - succeeds & is separate from policy making	- interaction of factions - negotiation of interests - intertwined with policy making	- evolution of dispositions - mutual adaptation - intertwined with policy making
Implementation strategy	rational - empirical	power - coercive	normative - reeducative

Note. PM = policy maker; PI = policy implementer that of superordinate to subordinate. Moreover, it is assumed that the two groups share a common value framework and accept that the policy is in the common interest, so that the cooperation of implementers is automatic. In sum, imple- menters are viewed as passive consumers. The crux of implementation is the clarity and specificity of the policy, the effective transmission of instruction from policy makers to policy implementers, the ability of the implementers to carry out the instructions, and the means to monitor and ensure compliance (Edwards & Sharkansky, 1978).

Policy making and policy implementation are assumed to be bounded and sequential activities, with implementation resulting from the "irresistible unfolding" (Wildavsky, 1979) of the policy. In other words, the policy is all, and given a well-formulated policy and appropriate introduction of it, implementation is inevitable. Thus the focal point of this perspective is the policy itself, and the problem is to find how best to design it. There is a belief that there is a single best means to achieve each common end and that technology and research will provide that single best means.

Finally, policy implementation is assumed to be a rational and technical process. Consequently rational-empirical implementation strategies, those which attempt to justify the proposed change to implementers in terms of rational arguments and to demonstrate to them how they will gain in terms of improved performance and increased efficiency (Chin and Benne, 1976), are employed. This accounts for the heavy reliance on dissemination of information, staff retraining, and the use of consultants to facilitate both.

The classical or technological model of policy implementation has influenced the efforts of both policy makers and researchers for some time, but the findings of recent studies challenge its basic assumptions. For example, the assumption of an hierarchical structure has been undermined by two different sets of findings. The first concern implementation projects in which different levels of government, different government agencies, or a combination of public and private agencies were involved. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), Bardach (1977), Lipsky (1978), McLaughlin (1976), and Radin (1977) all found that the relationship between the federal and local implementers was one of negotiation between equals rather than of superordinate over subordinate. The local organizations had their own goals and norms, and a power base in their own environments. The federal implementers, on the other hand, generally had no real authority over the local implementers and no means of ensuring compliance. Consequently, as Berman (1978) says, "The policy passes through and is transmuted by successive levels of implementation. The net result is that the effective power to determine a policy's outcome rests with the local deliverers" (p. 159). The second set of studies concern policy implementation within single organizations or agencies (Lipsky, 1978; Mintzberg, 1979b), but the findings are similar -- the greater the discretion enjoyed by the "operating core" (i.e., the people doing the basic work to produce the products or services), the more they "make" the policy in a very real sense.

The findings of numerous studies have challenged the assumption that policy making and policy implementation are bounded and sequential activities. For example, it has been found that: policy design has profound effects on policy implementation (Hargrove, 1975; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973); the relationship between policy makers and policy implementers, ranging from compliance or mutual adaptation to non-compliance and even co-optation, is crucial to policy implementation (McLaughlin, 1976); policy implementers intervene in the policy making arena in an attempt to influence policy directions (Radin, 1977); policy makers intervene in the policy implementation arena in an attempt to influence implementation directions (Bardach, 1977); and, in a very real sense, policy is "made" by the people who implement it (Lipsky, 1976, 1978; Mintzberg, 1979b).

It has been well-established that policy making is not the strictly rational and comprehensive process it was once assumed to be, and there is also good evidence that policy implementation is not merely a technical and nonpolitical activity. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) emphasized the delays that occur as a result of what they have termed the "complexity of joint actions," the negotiations that must accompany all decisions. Some of the personal and psychological factors which influence the actors in the implementation arena were highlighted and explored by McLaughlin (1976) and Van Meter and Van

Horn (1975), while Bardach (1977) and Radin (1977) identified some of the strategies employed by policy implementers. The importance of the institutional setting, the personal, political, and organizational forces at work in the implementation arena, was emphasized by Berman (1978), Sorg (1978) and Rein and Rabinovitz (1978).

The classical or technological model has proved inadequate in explaining many of the research findings about policy implementation, and the political model is an alternative which overcomes some of its predecessor's limitations.

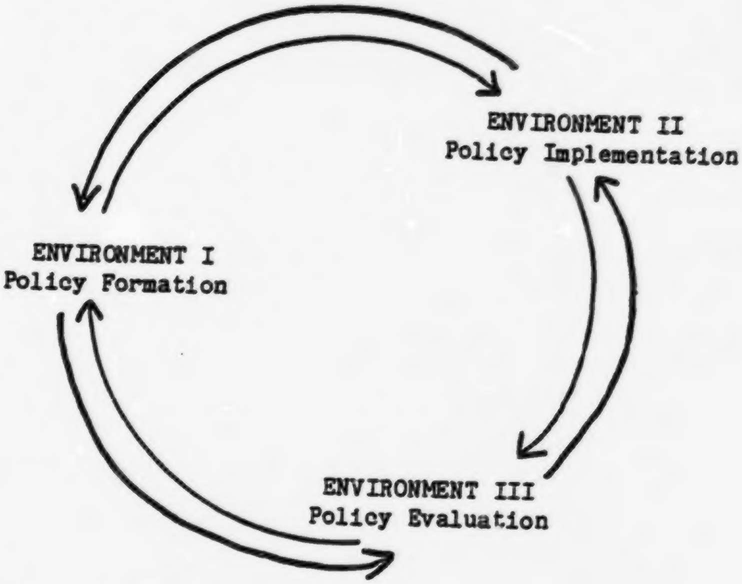
Political Model

Nakamura and Smallwood (1980) provide a detailed description of this model, which is depicted in Figure 2-1. In this model, the policy process is seen as a system of three environments, each of which has a specific function (namely, policy formation, policy implementation, or policy evaluation), each of which contains a variety of actors and arenas, and each of which is connected to the other two by various communication and compliance mechanisms. Its major assumptions include variable policy maker-policy implementer linkages, a cyclical and open process, and complexity and dynamism.

The relationship between policy makers and policy implementers is assumed to be based on a balance of power, with each group having different resources under its control. Implementers have their own goals and values and interests which may differ from, and even be in

Figure 2-1

The Political Model of Policy Implementation


ENVIRONMENT II
Policy Implementation
ENVIRONMENT I
Policy Formation
ENVIRONMENT III
Policy Evaluation

Source: Based on Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980, p. 27.

conflict with, those of policy makers, so cooperation cannot be assumed and often must be negotiated. On the other hand, because both groups accept the same general value framework, consensus on broad goals at least is possible. Implementers are not viewed as playing a passive role, but instead are seen as engaging in a power struggle with the policy makers. Nakamura and Smallwood describe five possible linkages between policy makers and policy implementers in which the power to control the policy process shifts from the former to the latter (see Table 2-2).

Policy implementation is assumed to be an open and cyclical process in which actors can participate in different roles in different environments, that is, actors need not confine their activities to their specific environment. This is not to say that all actors in the system have equal power to dominate the policy process, but rather than actors within any one environment can influence actors in the other two environments, often significantly. For example, if the policy is vague or ambiguous, then implementers become vulnerable to the demands of actors in the policy making environment to favour a specific interpretation of the policy. Similarly, actors in the policy making environment frequently send various political cues and signals to the implementers which may direct implementation in the desired direction, but which may also serve to confuse the meaning of the policy or to lead the implementers to favour an interpretation of the policy other than the one intended.

Table 2-2

Possible Linkages Between Policy Makers and Policy Implementers

Linkages	Activities of	
	Policy Makers	Policy Implementers
Classical Technocracy	formulate specific goals	devise technical means to achieve goals
Instructed Delegation	formulate specific goals	devise administrative means to achieve goals
Bargaining	formulate general goals	bargain with policy makers over both goals and means
Discretionary Experimentation	support abstract (undefined) goals	refine both goals and means for policy makers
Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship	support implementers' goals and means	formulate goals and means, persuade policy makers to accept them

Source: Based on Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980, pp. 114 & 115.

Note. In all five linkages the term "policy maker" refers to those individuals in the policy making environment who possess the formal authority and legitimacy to formulate policies, whether or not the policy initiative actually rests with them.

Furthermore, the processes of policy making and policy implementation are seen as closely intertwined. In fact, the policy-in-practice is thought to be determined as much, or possibly even more, by the process of implementation as by the policy itself. Thus the focal point of this perspective is the policy in context, with policy being seen more as a set of bargaining points than as a set of explicit instructions. Policy implementation, then, is highly interactive in nature, and is characterized by bargaining and negotiation.

Finally, policy implementation is assumed to be a complex and dynamic process influenced by such strategies as persuasion, inducements, and coercion [what Chin and Benne (1976) classify as power-coercive implementation strategies] rather than by technical knowledge and research findings. The implementation environment is seen as containing a variety of different actors, all attempting to influence the course of implementation. It is the task of those charged with directing the implementation process to coordinate the activities of these actors in a way that will lead to successful and effective program performance, even when, as is often the case, the policy directives are ambiguous and diffuse. They may not have the power to secure compliance from all actors through the manipulation of sanctions and rewards, especially from those who are located in outside arenas such as lobby groups and the press, and so must rely heavily on negotiation, persuasion and compromise.

While the political model has proved useful in understanding and accounting for research findings, it too has certain limitations. For example, Wildavsky (1979) raises the concern that "emphasis on consensus, bargaining, and political maneuvering can easily lead (and has, in fact led) to the conception that implementation is its own reward" (p. 181). Others consider this model unable to explain puzzling and inconsistent findings on implementation, and have sought alternate explanations, as the following examples illustrate.

Both Hargrove et al. (1981) and Johnson (1981) found that the implementation of school district policy varied considerably from school to school, depending largely on staff norms and ways of working together. This school-specific nature of implementation was also reported by the Rand studies (Berman et al., 1975; Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, 1975) and Emrick and Peterson (1978), who, in addition, identified mutual adaptation as a fundamental attribute of implementation. Mutual adaptation involves change on the part of both the implementers and the policy -- implementers must modify their practices in response to the policy, but the policy also must be modified in response to the local environment.

Implementation by "street-level bureaucrats" (that is, those public employees who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs and who enjoy substantial discretion in the execution of their work) has been examined by Lipsky (1976), Weatherly and Lipsky (1978), and Yin et al. (1978). They relate successful implementation to its impact on the work structure, which involves the routinization of new practices to replace established ones. The specific resolution of the demand-resource dilemma posed by the policy, however, is dependent on local conditions and thus the policy-in-practice assumes different forms in different settings. Even when implementation efforts have been successful, these changes are seldom institutionalized (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Berman & Pauly, 1975). When institutionalization does occur, it can be related to the goals, norms, practices, and infrastructure of the context (Berman & McLaughlin, 1979).

Clarification has been identified as another fundamental attribute of implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977). It refers to the process by which implementers develop a clearer understanding of the meaning, philosophy, and operational objectives of the policy, of what it is they are doing and why. It can only occur during implementation -- "The conceptual clarity critical to project success and continuation must be achieved during the process of implementation -- it cannot be 'given' to staff at the outset" (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1979, p. 80) -- and must not be confused with policy specificity, which is a design feature. The extent to which implementers develop conceptual clarity is related to characteristics of the setting.

Two themes permeate these explanations -- context-dependency and adaptation -- and they form the basis of the cultural or evolutionary model of policy implementation. It is the most recent, and consequently least fully formulated, of the three perspectives, but it has influenced a number of studies of implementation (e.g., Farrar et al., 1980; Goodlad, 1975; Smith et al., 1981; Wolcott, 1977).

Cultural or Evolutionary Model

In this model policy makers and policy implementers are thought of as belonging to different cultures or different subcultures within the same culture. Each culture or subculture is characterized by a distinct set of beliefs, values, interests, norms, and traditions, which may be so different that one group cannot understand the other's perspective. Not only can a common framework of values, even on a general level, not be assumed, but there may not even be a basis or accepted procedure for reaching agreement. Thus implementer cooperation is problematic, depending as it does on the development of shared understanding and traditions between policy makers and implementers.

Policy is assumed to be a set of multiple dispositions to act, the realization of which depends both on the intrinsic qualities of the policy and on the characteristics of the implementing setting. The policy-in-practice is inextricably linked to the original policy idea and to the context -- policy shapes implementation, but implementation also shapes policy. Wildavsky (1979) quotes Cardinal Newman on the concrete representation of any new idea to convey this notion:

> It will, in proportion to its native vigour and subtlety, introduce itself into the framework and details of social life, changing public opinion and supporting or undermining the foundations of established order. Thus in time it has grown into an ethical code, or into a system of government, or into a theology, or into a ritual, according to its capabilities; and this system, or body of thought, theoretical and practical ... will after all be only the adequate representation of the original idea, being nothing else than what the very idea meant from the first — its exact image as seen in a combination of the most diversified aspects, with the suggestions and corrections of many minds, and the illustration of many trials. (p. 184)

Policy implementation, then, is seen as the evolution of the ideas or dispositions inherent in the policy within specific settings. Given the continuity and stability of cultures and subcultures, and the value placed on tradition, change cannot be expected to occur quickly. If the policy is to have anything other than a symbolic impact, then implementation must be characterized by mutual adaptation and clarification. Implementers must make fundamental changes in their beliefs and practices, and this must be guided and supported by normative-reeducative implementation strategies (Chin & Benne, 1976), those which focus on problem-solving, adaptation, and professional growth.

A Multiperspective Approach

The question is not which of the three perspectives on policy implementation is correct, but rather which is most appropriate in the given circumstances. At one time the classical or technological model was the predominant influence on both those planning and executing implementation and those studying it. More recently the political and the cultural or evolutionary models have gained currency.

Some suggest that the appropriateness of the model used depends on the nature of the policy. For example, Berman (1980) distinguishes between programmed and adaptive implementation: in the former case the interaction between the policy or innovation and the setting is certain, that is, it is a technologically dominant process and thus can be explained in terms of the classical or technological perspective; in the latter case the interaction is uncertain, that is, it is an implementation dominant process and thus better explained by one of the other two perspectives.

House (1981) argues for the utility of interpreting the same events from different perspectives in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the implementation process. [Allison's (1971) analysis of the Cuban missile crisis and Tyack's (1976) analysis of the history of compulsory schooling demonstrate this approach in other contexts.] He expects that the classical or technological model will still dominate practice and research, but that it will be blended with the other two in order to "take cognizance of political and cultural realities it has often studiously neglected" (p. 35).

This emphasis on the context-dependent and time-dependent nature of implementation does raise questions about the generalizability of the findings. As Berman (1981) says:

> The crux of the matter is this: The number of significant interactions among variables may be too numerous and too complex to develop and test powerful generalizations or unified theory. In the extreme, so many conditions about the context may have to be stated ... that "findings" would hold only for individual districts -- or, indeed, individual schools.
>
> I am not convinced, however, that the case for this nominalistic extreme has yet been demonstrated. The past decade's progress on understanding educational change processes suggests a more optimistic assessment. I expect we will be able to develop limited, time-bound generalizations and partial theories within broad classes of contextual conditions. (pp. 218 & 219)

Berman then suggests five broad classes of variables shown to affect the educational change process: (a) local contextual conditions, that is, characteristics of the community, the district, and the individual schools which are relatively fixed and which differ across districts; (b) primary attributes of the change effort, that is, characteristics of the policy or innovation which do not change over time and which constrain how much adaptation occurs; (c) local policy choices, that is, those strategic decisions related to the implementation of the policy or innovation; (d) endogenous variables, that is, those attributes of the policy or innovation which change across settings and over time; and (e) external variables, that is, outside factors subject to change during implementation. Examples of the types of variables encompassed by each class are presented in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3

Factors Affecting the Educational Change Process-
Illustrative Variables Suggested by the Literature

Factor		Variables
I.	Local contextual conditions	District characteristics (such as school board traits, leadership of administration, organizational structure, level of professionalism, organizational health, size financial status, priorities)
		Characteristics of implementing subsystem (such as elementary or secondary, size, leadership traits, staff attributes, organizational climate)
		Student characteristics
		Community characteristics
II.	Primary attributes of change effort	Core substance of technology
		Certainty of technology
		Complexity of change effort
		Scope of change effort
		Centrality of change effort
		Cost
III.	Local policy choices	Participation strategies
		Staff development activities
		Coordination, control, communication procedures

Table 2-3 (Continued)

Factor		Variables
IV.	Endogenous variables	Attitudes of users over time
		Attitudes of key actors over time (for example, administrators, board members)
		Evolution of policy image
		Support for change effort
		Extent and quality of planning
		Degree of conflict over change effort
		Community involvement
		Clarity about innovation
		Change in user behavior, organizational arrangements, and technology
V.	External variables	Stability of funding
		Federal and state regulations
		Episodic changes in context (such as new superintendent, new principal, teacher strike, Proposition 13)

Source. Berman, 1981, p. 280.

Chapter Summary

There are three major models or perspectives on policy implementation. The classical or technological model focuses on the policy itself, its characteristics and components. Policy is seen as a set of instructions which implementers, as subordinates in the system who share the values and interests of the policy makers, are willing to execute. Policy implementation, then, is merely the unfolding of plans embodied in the policy in a systematic and rational fashion, and as such succeeds and is separate from the process of policy-making.

The political model focuses on the policy in context, that is, on the power relationships between policy makers and policy implementers and their struggles to control the policy process. Policy is seen as a set of bargaining points over which the two factions negotiate and seek compromises in order to achieve consensus on values and goals and to resolve conflicts in interests. Policy implementation, then, involves the interaction of different factions, and it largely determines the policy-in-practice.

The cultural or evolutionary model focuses on the context, which is viewed as a culture or subculture in which meaningful change can occur only slowly, and only through mutual adaptation and clarification. Policy makers and implementers, belonging as they do to different cultures or subcultures, have different and often conflicting values and interests which can only be reconciled through the development of shared understandings. Policy is viewed as a set of dispositions which evolve during implementation in response to environmental conditions but which also constrain the direction this evolution takes. Policy implementation, then, is characterized by mutual adaptation, and the policy-in-practice is determined both by the original policy idea and by the context.

The implication for research of these three perspectives on policy implementation is the delineation of critical dimensions of the implementation process and of general classes of contextual variables, thus establishing boundaries for data collection and analysis. A study of policy implementation should not focus just on the policy and its implementation, but also on the relatively stable context into which they must be incorporated. With specific reference to this study, the boundaries of the inquiry can be outlined in the form of five broad research questions. The first three are related directly to the policy and its implementation:

1. What are the primary attributes of the policy? This refers to the invariant features of the policy which constrain the implementation process such as its complexity, specificity, and scope;

2. What decisions are made which bear directly on the implementation process? This refers in particular to the implementation strategies employed, but also to the conceptualizations of the nature of policy, policy implementation, implementer role, and policy maker-policy implementer relationship which influence these decisions;

and

3. What are the endogenous attributes of the policy? This refers to the variable features of the policy which become known during the implementation process, and include the policy maker-policy implementer relationship, the values and interests of the various actors, implementer cooperation, implementer role, and the implementation process.

The remaining two questions concern the context in general:

4. What are the local contextual conditions? This refers to the characteristics of the community, the district, and the individual schools which might influence the implementation process; and

5. What external changes occur during the course of implementation? This refers to factors which originate outside the district or which are episodic in nature that might influence the implementation process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

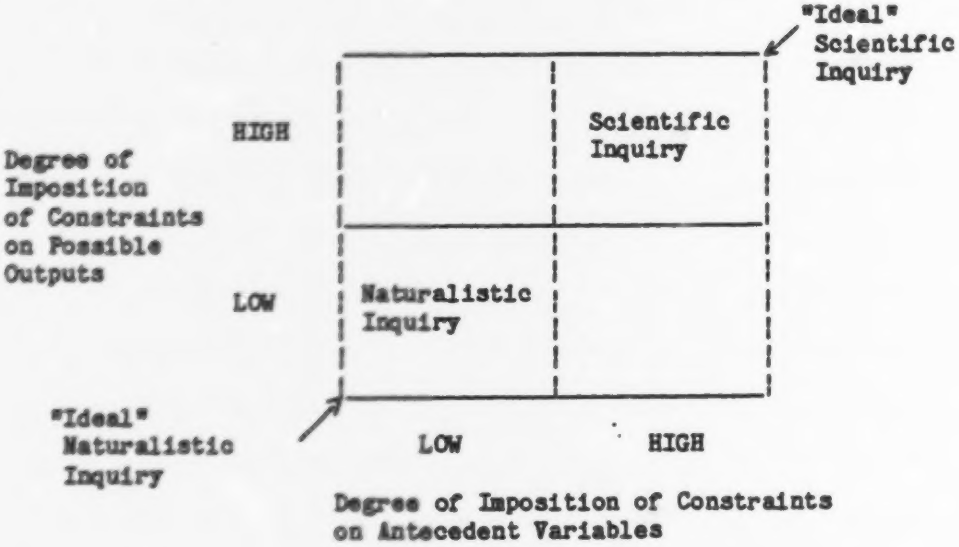
Research Paradigm

Two paradigms dominate disciplined inquiry into educational problems. Neither has a universally accepted name, but for purposes of discussion the terms naturalistic and scientific will be used. The scientific paradigm assumes that there is a single reality onto which findings converge. This single reality is fragmentable into discrete variables, thus making it possible to isolate a small number of variables for study while controlling the others. Scientific inquiry focuses on the similarities among exemplars of a phenomenon, leading to the formulation of context-free general laws. The naturalistic paradigm, on the other hand, assumes that there are different perspectives of reality, none of which is necessarily more "true" than the others. Moreover, reality must be viewed holistically: the focus of naturalistic inquiry is the interrelationships among variables and the different patterns of these interrelationships depending on the context, resulting in the formulation of context-bound working hypotheses. [For a more detailed description of the differences between the two paradigms, both essential and non-essential, the reader is referred to Chapter 4 of Guba and Lincoln (1981). Cook and Reichardt (1979), Denzin (1978a), Patton (1980), and Rist (1977, 1979) also examine this issue.]

Figure 3-1 presents a conceptualization of the differences between the two paradigms as they are expressed in operational terms:

Figure 3-1

Representation of the Domain of Inquiry


"Ideal"
Scientific
Inquiry
HIGH
Scientific
Inquiry
Degree of
Imposition
of Constraints
on Possible
Outputs
LOW
Naturalistic
Inquiry
"Ideal"
Naturalistic
Inquiry
LOW
HIGH
Degree of Imposition of Constraints
on Antecedent Variables

Source: Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 79.

Antecedent variables refer to those which impinge on the study at the outset and which may be manipulated, controlled, randomized, and the like. Any such decisions by the inquirer imposes constraints on the antecedent variables: low levels of constraints are typical of naturalistic inquiry, while high levels of constraints are typical of scientific inquiry. Outputs refer to those variables which the inquirer attends to during the study. Again these variables may be constrained to varying degrees, with low levels of constraints being typical of naturalistic inquiry and high levels being typical of scientific inquiry. Of course different combinations of constraints on both antecedent variables and outputs are possible, and being able to depict this is one advantage of the conceptualization of the domain of inquiry represented in Figure 3-1.

This differential imposition of constraints on antecedent variables and outputs is consistent with the basic assumptions of each paradigm. Belief in a single, convergent, fragmentable reality and in context-free general laws permits the scientific inquirer to isolate and manipulate a few variables while controlling the others in some way. The naturalistic inquirer, on the other hand, attempts to preserve the holistic nature of the context and to identify and describe the different perspectives of reality, and so avoids imposing constraints as much as possible. There has been considerable heated, and even bitter, debate the merits of each paradigm, the validity of its assumptions, and the utility of its findings. Increasingly frequently, however, the issue has shifted from determination of which set of assumptions is "true" to which set of assumptions better "fits" the phenomenon under study.

The naturalistic paradigm has been found to be better suited than the scientific to deal with the following kinds of questions (see Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Janesick, 1981; and Lutz & Iannaccone, 1969):

1. those which involve the meaning people attribute to events,

the ways in which people define situations, people's motives and perceptions, and the like;

2. those which involve the possibility of different perspectives on the phenomenon to be investigated;

3. those which are likely to be influenced in important ways by the context; and

4. those which are holistic in nature, that is, the phenomenon to be investigated is characterized by groups of interacting variables rather than by independently important variables.

According to the literature review presented in Chapter II, policy implementation is a complex process which depends on participants' interpretations of the policy and their definitions of issues and problems, which may be perceived differently by different participants, which is influenced by a variety of psychological, political, and institutional variables, and which is better understood when considered holistically. There is a good match between the types of questions the naturalistic paradigm is best suited to investigate and the types of questions involved in a study of policy implementation. For this reason, this study of policy implementation in a school district was conducted in the naturalistic paradigm.

Research Design

Researcher Role

Of the three inquirer roles identified by Lutz and Iannaccone (1969), the participant as observer role is inapplicable in this situation. The observer as non-participant role is inappropriate for this study, because it does not allow discussion with participants. Thus information about past events and about the participants' perceptions, motives, criteria for decision-making, and the like would be inaccessible except for that which could be inferred from their behaviour.

The most suitable inquirer role for this study, then, seems to be that of observer as participant. The major advantage of this role is that it gives the inquirer the freedom to focus on activities of interest. It also enables the inquirer to develop some understanding of the different perspectives of the participants while at the same time retaining a degree of detachment which is necessary for analysis.

A limitation of this role is that an observer is always prohibited from certain activities of the participants. The extent to which this limitation is detrimental to the results of the study depends on the extent to which the participants trust the researcher and are willing to act as informants, that is, to volunteer information which would otherwise be inaccessible to the researcher. Such trust is likely to develop only if the participants are assured of confidentiality, if they feel that the researcher is non-judgmental and interested in what they have to say, if they perceive the researcher has some understanding of the situation and is capable of appreciating their position, and if they do not feel that the researcher is aligned with any particular group in their social setting.

The Case Study

According to Yin (1981), the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it is a research strategy which attempts to examine "(a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 59). Campbell (1979) and Kenny and Groteluesschen (1980) define case studies similarly, emphasizing the utility of case studies to explain a phenomenon in a way which is consistent with one's common-sense knowledge of the context. Given that the purpose of the study is to investigate policy implementation -- a contemporary phenomenon, in a school district -- a real-life context, the case study is an appropriate research design. In fact, the use of the case study in policy research has frequently been advocated (Eckstein, 1975; Kenny & Groteluesschen, 1980; Simeon, 1976).

The case study as a research strategy has been criticized, however, especially the state-of-the-art of within-case analysis. Miles (1979) probably expressed the concerns of others when he characterized within-case analysis as "essentially intuitive, primitive, and unmanageable" (p. 597), although he did agree that the final reports possess a "strong ring of truth" (p. 597). Supporters of the case study argue that its ability to portray convincingly what has occurred in a particular setting is its strength, and that systematic procedures to facilitate data collection and analysis do exist. These will be discussed in some detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The criticism that "case studies have a tendency not to focus on the 'normal' but on the unique, exotic or important, so insights gained from them may actually be misleading" (Simeon, 1976, p. 551) was taken into consideration in selecting the school district, the four schools within the district, and the two policies that were to be studied. Lyttefield school district is similar to other districts in its geographic region and to urban districts in other geographic regions in the province in terms of size, pupil-teacher ratio, average school size, per pupil cost, and administrative organization, all of which are factors traditionally considered in studies of implementation. The four schools, although differing in size, location, and the manner in which they are implementing the two policies under study, are judged by members of the central office staff to be typical of the schools in the district. The two policies under study, the community relations policy and the elementary school self-assessment policy, were selected in consultation with the appropriate school district officials according to several criteria:

1. the policies address problems which are of general interest

and which are likely to be encountered in other school districts;

2. the policies originate at different levels in the educational system: the elementary school self-assessment policy originated at the provincial level, and the policy on community relations originated at the district level;

3. the policies are substantial in nature, that is, they have an impact on a considerable number of people;

4. the policies are of interest to the district, that is, information about the implementation of these policies would be useful to the district;

5. documentation about the policies exists, including: a policy statement, a set of guidelines or procedures, minutes of meetings, letters and briefs from interested parties, and memos to the principals and teachers; and

6. the policies have been made or revised fairly recently so that those familiar with their development and early implementation efforts are available for interviewing.

Another criticism of case studies is that "their focus has often been on the details of the policy itself, rather than using the policy to generalize about politics ... It is easy to get submerged in the minutiae of the issue itself and therefore to miss what might be much broader factors influencing the outcome" (Simeon, 1976, p. 551). An attempt was made to avoid these pitfalls by limiting a description of the findings to two chapters while using four to analyse and discuss them, and by comparing the findings to those of related studies.

For both the community relations (CR) policy and the elementary school self-assessment (ESSA) policy, implementation activities clearly fall into two groups: those which involve people at the district level and are aimed at district level concerns and those which involve people at the school level and are aimed at school level concerns. For this reason the collecting and recording of data have been organized according to the policy issue (CR policy; ESSA policy; policy implementation in general) and the level of concern (district; school). An outline of the research design is given in Table 3-1.

Three data collecting methods have been utilized, with the interview being the predominant one and observations and document analysis playing a supplementary and confirmatory role.

Formal Interviews

General characteristics. Formal interviews were always scheduled ahead of time, were held in locations selected by the respondent (usually an office or classroom), were generally 45 to 90 minutes in length, were audiotaped, and were conducted according to a flexible interview guide. At the district level the respondents consist of those people who are involved in the implementation of one or both of the policies; at the school level, the respondents consist of the principal, the vice principal or head teacher, and a selected group of teachers.

Table 3-1

Research Design

Data Collecting Method	Data Collecting Situation	Data Sources	Policy Issues		
			CR	ESSA	General
		LEVEL OF CONCERN - DISTRICT			
interview	formal	Board members	*	*	*
		ESSA committee		*	*
		teacher assoc. president	*	*	*
		Ministry Asst. Supt. of Schools		*	
	informal	some Board members	*	*	*
		CO staff	*	*	*
		ESSA committee		*	*
		CO secretaries			*
observation	specific	Board meetings			*
		CRC meetings	*		*
		Principals' meeting			*
	nonspecific	daily activities at the Board office			*
document analysis	minutes		*	*	*
	files		*	*	*
	policy book		*	*	*
	publications		*		
	reports		*		

Table 3-1 (Continued)

Data Collecting Method	Data Collecting Situation	Data Sources	Policy Issues		
			CR	ESSA	General
		LEVEL OF CONCERN - SCHOOL			
interview	formal	principals	*	*	*
		teachers	*	*	*
	informal	principals	*	*	*
		teachers	*	*	*
		secretaries	*		*
		a few parents	*		
observation	specific	PAC meeting	*		
	nonspecific	daily activities	*		*
document analysis		minutes	*		
		publications	*		
		year end reports			*

Note. CR = community relations; ESSA = elementary school self-assessment; CO = central office; assoc. = association; asst. supt. = assistant superintendent; CRC = community relations committee; PAC = parent advisory committee.

Preparing the respondent. Before the interview took place, the respondents received a letter which contained the following information:

1. introduction to the researcher (name, role, affiliation);
2. assurance of the sponsorship of the superintendent, and of the principal where appropriate;
3. explanation of the purpose of the study; and
4. explanation of why the respondent had been selected.

A two-page description of the study and of what participation in the study entailed as well as a consent form detailing provisions for anonymity and confidentiality accompanied the letter. Copies of the introductory materials sent to the participants who had been selected for interviewing are contained in Appendix A.

This information was repeated at the beginning of the interview, to remind the respondents of the type of data that would be required of them.

Planning the interview. The overall purpose of the interviews was to obtain as complete and as accurate a description of the implementation of the CR and ESSA policies as possible. This was done by asking the respondents questions related to the following five topics:

1. the activities being carried out at that time as implementa-

tion of the policies -- for example, a principal or teacher might be asked "What are some of the ways your school has had contact with the community this year?". The intent of this series of questions was to encourage the respondents to define what constitutes implementation of the policies from their own perspective.

2. the beliefs and values underlying these activities -- for example, the respondent might be asked "Of the CR activities you have just listed, which do you think is the most important? Why is that?". The intent of this series of questions was to encourage the respondents to indirectly reveal their feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, etc., through their evaluations.

3. the development of these activities -- for example, the respondent might be asked "How did the idea to have a Cabaret Night arise?". The intent of this series of questions was to encourage the respondent to trace the history of the activities, mainly to see what changes had taken place since the policies had been approved and thus might be attributable to the policies.

4. influences on the development of these activities -- for example, the respondents might be asked "Has there been any change in attitude towards community relations in the district in the last five years? What makes you say that?". The intent of this series of questions was to encourage the respondent to describe any attempt by the Board, the central office staff, or the principal to influence or direct the implementation of the policies.

5. general characteristics of the district and the school which might affect policy implementation -- for example, the respondent might be asked "How do you as a teacher know when the Board feels strongly about an issue? Can you give me an example?". The intent of this series of questions is to encourage the respondent to describe general communication linkages between the Board, the central office staff, and the schools.

In addition, the respondents were asked for some personal information related to their careers as educators.

Several different guides were developed, depending on the role of the respondent (e.g.: Superintendent and staff; School Board members; ESSA committee; principals and teachers -- a copy of each is contained in Appendix B). The guides consist of a list of the topics and of questions within topics, and possible transition statements from one topic to the next. The guides were not rigidly adhered to, but were used to prepare for the interviews, to structure the interviews, and to check, towards the end of the interviews, that all the topics had been covered.

Two principles guided the sequencing of topics and of questions within topics: focus on the present before the past -- this has the twofold purpose of reassuring the respondents that the information requested is within their ability to provide, and of stimulating their memory about similar events in the past; and focus on facts before feelings -- this also has a double rationale, introducing the least ego threatening questions first, and lessening the possibility that the recollection of events and activities will be distorted to coincide with stated value positions.

The questions were intended to be broad, open-ended and neutral in nature, in order to encourage the respondents to reveal their paths of association, their importance ratings of various aspects of the implementation of the policies, their frames of reference, and their vocabulary. In other words, it was hoped that the interview situation itself would exert as little influence as possible on the respondents' answers. There was one circumstance, however, under which leading questions were used, that is, when the respondent was reluctant to give a particular response. For example, the respondent might not have felt free to express the opinion that parents should not be involved in school decisions. The question would then have been framed to suggest that this is a controversial area, that a diversity of opinion exists, and thus that any position on this issue is acceptable.

Preparing the interview guides was largely influenced by Gorden (1975) and Lortie (1975).

Recording the interview. Unless the respondent objected, the formal interviews were audiotaped. In spite of the time required to transcribe the tapes, there are several benefits to having such a record of the interviews: the accuracy of notes taken during the interview can be checked by comparison with the tapes; nonverbal information such as tone of voice, hesitations, etc., are recorded along with the verbal information; it is possible to quote the respondents directly, using their own words; it is possible to reanalyse the data at a later date; and perhaps most important, the tapes can be analysed from the perspective of interviewing techniques, as a means of improving interviewing skills.

Informal Interviews

Informal interviews were generally brief, unscheduled encounters during which information collected during the formal interviews was verified, clarified, or expanded. They were also used to obtain general background information about the context. At the district level the respondents consist of those who participated in the formal interviews plus other professional and clerical central office staff; at the school level, the respondents consist of those who participated in the formal interviews plus other staff members and a few parents.

Specific Observations

Specific observations were those made at specific events such as meetings. They focused on such things as what issues were raised, what positions were taken, what decisions were made, who spoke, who directed matters, and the like. Data were collected in the form of field notes and consisted mainly of the names of the speakers, the

gist of what they said (verbatim as much as possible), and the reactions of others, both verbal and nonverbal, as well as motions and how people voted. Although it was originally hoped that it would be possible to observe instances of planning for the implementation of the selected policies and of making implementation decisions, there were few such opportunities, the ESSA committee meeting being the major exception. Nevertheless, the observations did provide some information about policy implementation in the district in general, and also about various district and school activities which constitute in part the implementation of the CR policy.

Nonspecific Observations

Nonspecific or transient (Murphy, 1980) observations were those made during the course of daily activities at the Board office or at the four school sites. These were also recorded in the form of field notes, and they provided information about general matters such as climate, interpersonal relations, communications, and treatment of parents and other community members. The purpose of these observations was to obtain background information and to develop some understanding of the context rather than to collect data specifically related to the implementation of the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies.

The collection and analysis of both the specific and the nonspecific observational data was influenced by Guba and Lincoln (1981), Murphy (1980), and Spradley (1980).

Document Analysis

Several different types of documents were examined, including minutes of meetings, files, publications, and reports. Document analysis produced two types of information: the first was essentially factual in nature — the identification of the sequence of events and decisions, the names of the people involved, etc.; the second was mainly inferential in nature -- the identification of issues and concerns, of attitudes and values, and the like. This analysis was influenced largely by Guba and Lincoln (1981).

Data Collection

Overview

As described previously, the data collection was organized into two parts, with Part I focusing on district level concerns and Part II focusing on school level concerns. In addition, both parts were divided into two stages, preliminary work and focused data collection. The first stage took about two weeks, and involved what Murphy (1980) called "sizing up the site": identifying people to interview, events to observe, documents to analyse; in general, becoming familiar with the site and planning stage 2 activities. An additional three weeks were required for Part II to select the four school sites and gain access to them. The second stage involved the major interviewing, observing, and document analysis. It lasted about seven weeks for Part I, and about ten weeks for Part II. The third stage took place the following fall, and involved collecting whatever additional information was required.

This information is summarized in Table 3-2.

District Level of Concern

Stage 1. Stage 1 activities consisted mainly of interviews with the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent -- elementary, and Community Relations Coordinator, and reading the files on community relations and elementary school self assessment supplied by these people.

Stage 2. The people interviewed, the events observed, and the documents analysed are listed in Tables 3-3, 3-5 and 3-6 respectively.

The respondents in the formal interviews were selected because of their involvement with either or both the community relations and elementary schol self-assessment policies. Observations were made at most of the Board meetings because there were so few opportunities to observe and talk to the Board members. Because the Community Relations Committee was closely linked, in theory at least, with the CR policy, most of these meetings were observed as well. The ESSA committee meeting was observed for the same reason; the ESSA orientation workshop was to have been observed, but it has been postponed indefinitely. Only one of the Principals' meetings was observed, because the others were primarily concerned with administrative matters and it was judged more worthwhile to spend the

Table 3-2

Schedule of Activities

Date	Data Collection		
	Level of Concern	Stage	Task
Jan 11 - Jan 22	District	1	Preliminary work
Jan 25 - Mar 12	District	2	Focused data collection (mainly CO staff and ESSA committee)
Mar 15 - Apr 2	School	1	Selecting school sites and gaining access
Apr 13 - Apr 23	School	1	Preliminary work
Apr 26 - Jun 29	School	2	Focused data collection
Aug 23 - Aug 31	District	2	Focused data collection (mainly board members)
Sep - Jan	District & School	3	Supplementary data collection

Note. CO = central office; ESSA = elementary school self-assessment

Table 3-3

Interviews - District Level Concerns

Respondents	Context Informal	 Formal
School Board members		
Chairman	*	*
Vice Chairman	*	*
3 Community Relations Committee members	*	*
other 2	-	*
Central Office professional staff		
Superintendent	*	*
Deputy Superintendent	*	*
Assistant Superintendent - elem.	*	*
Coordinating Principal - elem.	*	*
Coordinating principal - sec.	*	-
Community Relations Coordinator	*	*
principal asked to vet ESSA materials	*	*
Central Office clerical staff		
Superintendent's secretary	*	-
Deputy Superintendent's secretary	*	-
Assistant Superintendent - elem.'s sec.	*	-
Secretary-Treasurer's sec.	*	-
ESSA committee (non-central office)		
3 principals	*	*
3 teachers	*	*
teacher association president	-	*
Ministry Assistant Superintendent of Schools	-	*

Note. ESSA = elementary school self-assessment

Table 3-4

Interviews - School Level Concerns

Respondents	Context	
	Informal	Formal
Fraser Elementary		
principal	*	*
head teacher	*	*
7 teachers	*	*
10 other teachers	*	-
secretary	*	-
some parents (parent advisory committee)	*	-
Thompson Elementary		
principal	*	*
head teacher	-	*
5 teachers	*	*
9 other teachers	*	-
secretary	*	-
community coordinator	*	*
community coordinator's secretary	*	*
parent advisory commitee	*	-
Columbia Elementary		
principal	*	*
head teacher	*	*
4 teachers	*	*
other 9 teachers	*	-
secretary	*	-
Lyttefield Secondary		
principal	*	*
vice principal	-	*
12 teachers	-	*
35 other teachers	*	-
secretary	*	-

Table 3-5

Observations

Type	Description
specific	
district	8 of 11 Board meetings
	3 of 5 Community Relations Committee mtgs.
	1 of 5 Principals meetings
	1 of 1 Elementary School Self-Assessment meetings
school - Fraser elem.	1 of 2 Parent Advisory Council meetings
Thompson elem.	2 of 3 Parent Advisory Council meetings
Columbia elem.	0 of 1 Parent Advisory Council meetings
Lyttefield sec.	0 of 0 Parent Advisory Council meetings
nonspecific	
district	daily activities at Board office; major sites = hallways, reception area, and cafeteria
school	daily activities at each of the schools; major sites = staffroom, halls, and office area

Table 3-6

Documents

Level	Types	
district	minutes -	Board meetings, Community relations Committee meetings, Principals meetings, ESSA committee meetings
	files -	community relations committee and public relations (Superintendent's); ESSA (Deputy Superintendent's; Assistant Superintendent - elem's)
	policy book	
	publications -	Welcome brochure; Facts brochure; newsletter
	reports -	status of parent advisory councils (requested on 3 occasions); plans for conducting ESSA
school	minutes -	parent advisory council meetings
	publications -	newsletters; welcome materials for parents; bulletins
	year end reports	

Note. ESSA = elementary school self-assessment

time in the schools. The documents examined were either identified by the respondents or were referred to in other documents.

School Level of Concern

Selecting and gaining access to the study sites. Four study sites were selected, three elementary schools, at which the implementation of the two policies was studied, and one secondary school, at which the implementation of the community relations policy was studied. In determining the sample size, an effort was made to maintain a balance between having one sufficiently large to show variations in the implementation of the policies but sufficiently small to permit some degree of familiarity with each setting.

The selection of the sites was guided by two principles: (a) maximize the range of information collected about the implementation of the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies; and (b) maximize the transferability of findings.

In order to maximize the range of information collected, the schools in the sample had to vary along the following dimensions:

1. the general state of the school's relations with the community;
2. the status of the parent advisory committee;
3. the expected degree of support for the ESSA policy;
4. general compliance with district policy.

As there were no relevant records or other sources of data available, the information was collected through interviews with the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendents, and the Coordinating Principals. All these people have been in the district ten or more years and all but one has held his or her present position for a minimum of five years. Except for the Superintendent, all the positions involve considerable contact with school personnel and frequent visits to the schools -- such a background attests to the ability of these people to make the judgments asked of them. Each school was rated by three people, the Superintendent and the appropriate Assistant Superintendent and Coordinating Principal, on each of the four dimensions. The questions were framed so as to be open-ended in nature (e.g., How would you describe ---- school's community relations?). The respondents usually dichotomized their responses -- high/low, good/ poor -- and they generally added an explanatory comment, which was recorded as well.

The four dimensions just named were related to implementation of the CR and ESSA policies, directly in the case of the first three and indirectly in the case of the fourth. In addition, the schools were chosen so that they differed in location and size, that is, there was at least one school from each of the three sectors, and there was at least one moderately large and one moderately small school. The reason for using sector as a dimension is that the district is divided into three sectors which are loosely correlated with socioeconomic status. For example, sector 1 is working class with a large Italian, Chinese, and East Indian population. Most of the elementary schools have ESL programs. Most of the children live in single dwelling complexes, and many stay for lunch at school because both parents work. The schools in this sector do not have a problem with declining enrollment; instead, several are bulging. The schools in sector 2 do have a problem with declining enrollment; in fact, several were closed recently. This is considered to be a mainly professional, fairly affluent area. Sector 3 also has a problem with declining enrollment, but not to the same extent. There is lower-cost housing and multiple-dwelling complexes in this area. There is also a high percentage of working mothers and single parent families.

In naturalistic research, the issue of transferability of findings to other sites is generally addressed in the later stages of the study, through the development of thick descriptions of the study site so that the readers are able to make informed judgments about the degree of similarity between their sites and the study site and thus of the applicability of the findings to their sites. In this study only schools which were judged by the three raters to be typical were included in the sample. This was done to maximize the transferability of findings and the possibility of generating hypotheses which can be tested later by traditional means.

Once the data had been compiled, schools were eliminated from the sample if: (a) there had been disagreement among the raters on one or more of the dimensions; and/or (b) they had been judged to be atypical. At this point there were 12 of the 50 elementary schools and 7 of the 10 secondary schools left in the sample.

The elementary schools were then assigned to the following groups: the first included the schools which had received positive ratings on each of the four dimensions; the second, those which had received negative feelings on each of the four dimensions; and the third, those which had received mixed ratings. Three of the schools in this last group had been rated positively on the general compliance dimension but negatively on those related to specific policies. As this seemed somewhat contradictory, the schools were eliminated from the sample.

Next the remaining nine schools were sorted by sector and size as well as ratings. As there was only one school given negative ratings on all four dimensions, a moderately large one from sector 2 called Columbia Elementary, it was included in the sample. The selection of the other two schools made use of the anecdotal data collected. Of the five schools given mixed ratings, a moderately small one in sector 3, Thompson Elementary, was chosen because although it was judged to have very good community relations, an active advisory council, and a compliant principal, the raters felt that compliance with policies was uncertain because of the "very strong staff". Of the two schools in sector 1 given all positive ratings, the moderately large one, Fraser Elementary, was chosen because it had established as a goal that year to make the parent advisory council more active than it had been.

As there was to be only one secondary school in the sample, it was decided that it should be a junior-secondary, thus eliminating five of the remaining seven schools. The two left in the sample were both judged to be generally compliant with policy directives, although neither had an active advisory council. The school in sector 1, Lyttefield Secondary, was selected because it had had a recent change in administrators, who had set as a goal the improvement of community relations, which had been poor for a number of years.

Once the schools had been selected, an appointment was arranged with the principals to discuss participation in the study. All agreed to participate, although the principal of Columbia Elementary was very reluctant; in fact, he was reluctant throughout the study. The principal of Lyttefield Secondary was cooperative, but in a passive way -- he gave me whatever I requested, met with me on several occasions, and sent a memo to the staff informing them of the study, etc., but never volunteered information. The other two elementary principals, on the other hand, were actively cooperative from the start, introducing me in person to the staff, making the school open to me, volunteering information, etc.

The characteristics of the four study sites is given in Table 3-7.

Stage 1. Stage 1 activities consisted mainly of interviews with the principal and skimming some of the documents, particularly year end reports, home bulletins, newsletters, agendas and minutes of the parent advisory council meetings, and welcome materials.

Stage 2. The people interviewed, the events observed, and the documents analysed are listed in Tables 3-4, 3-5, and 3-6 respectively. In addition to the principal and vice principal or head teacher, about 40% of the teachers at the elementary schools and 25% of the teachers at the secondary school participated in formal interviews. The percentage was smaller at the secondary school because of the larger staff size. The respondents were selected so as to differ with respect to subject area/grade level, years at present school, and degree of involvement with community relations activities. This information was obtained from the principal. Parent advisory committee meetings were observed whenever possible. The documents analysed were suggested by the respondents, or referred to by other documents.

Data Analysis

Formal Interviews

Assessing the interview. Upon completion of the interview, notes were made on the nonverbal behaviour of the respondent, on the data obtained, and on the interviewing techniques. Additions to the notes were made after listening to the audiotapes. The purpose of these notes was primarily to make some judgments about the credibility of

Table 3-7

Characteristics of the Study Site

	Schools			
Dimensions	Fraser	Columbia	Thompson	Lyttefield
Level	elem.	elem.	elem.	sec.
Sector	1	2	3	1
Size	ML	ML	MS	ML
Community Relations	good	fair	good	poor
Advisory Council	increasingly active	inactive	active	inactive
ESSA	supportive	nonsupportive	uncertain	-
Compliance	high	low	variable	high
Participation in Study	active cooperation	reluctance	active cooperation	passive cooperation

Note. ESSA = elementary school self-assessment

the account, but also to evaluate and help improve the inquirer's interviewing skills. The types of information contained in these notes is described more fully in the last section of this chapter.

Preparing interview notes. Originally it was intended that all the audiotapes would be transcribed, but this proved to be very time-consuming. Instead, notes were made during the interviews and these were completed by listening to the tapes.

Researchers using the case study approach frequently report how time-consuming it is to write up and organize field notes, and how this tends to detract from time spent on data analysis. Yin (1981) argues that field notes are essentially a collection of data elements, and thus time should be spent organizing them according to research topics and subtopics rather than writing them up as narratives. The narrative style should only be employed in later stages, when each topic and subtopic is developed by compiling the data obtained from the various respondents. Such a procedure was used in this study. During the interviews a separate page was used to record the response to each question, thus facilitating the comparison of responses at a later time. For example, the interview notes for the members of the Elementary School Self-Assessment Committee include the following sections: reasons for joining the Committee, original attitudes towards ESSA, decision-making in Committee meetings, plans for implementation, effects of the time lapse in completing the policy, and the major concerns about ESSA dealt with by the Committee.

Initial analysis. When the interview notes were completed, each section was divided into "ideational units", that is, into each distinct idea. For example, the following excerpt from the interview notes of a teacher contain five ideational units:

> There was no parent group when I first came here./ I was told there would be one soon/ because the new head teacher was committed to this/ and I was certainly relieved to hear this/ because I believe there should be a parent council/.

Next each ideational unit was coded as a descriptor, an interpretation or explanation, a concern or issue, or a value statement. Descriptors were defined as statements of perceptions about events or people. The first, second, and fourth ideational units above were coded as descriptors. Interpretations and explanations of events or people's behaviour offered by the respondents were coded as such. The third ideational unit above fits this category. Concerns were defined as matters of interest to the respondents and issues, as statements or propositions that allow for different, often conflicting, points of view. Sometimes respondents identify issues, but more frequently issues can be inferred from concerns. For example, the fifth ideational unit above was coded as a concern. It can be inferred that whether or not there should be parent councils may be an issue among teachers in that district. Values were sometimes stated explicitly, but more often had to be inferred. For example, the value underlying the fifth ideational unit may be responsiveness to the public or accountability. It would be necessary to examine the pattern of concerns and points of view expressed by this respondent before making any inferences about the values or beliefs underlying them.

Next the responses were tabulated by reference group. This was done by listing all the ideational units related to a particular subtopic. A separate sheet for each reference group -- each of the four schools, board members, central office staff, and ESSA committee -- was prepared as necessary, with individual columns for each respondents. A check mark was used to indicate which statements were made by each respondent. Thus it is possible to compare the responses within each reference group and across groups. For example, several different parent involvement activities were identified in the interview data. The tabulation sheets show which of the respondents in each school think which of the activities are appropriate ways for parents to be involved in the school. From this information, questions about consistency of thought within schools and differences among schools were raised. There was room on the sheets to record additional data from the document analyses and the observations.

Subsequent analysis. The initial analysis was closely tied to the data, and involved low levels of inference, but subsequent analyses were more highly inferential (see Becker, 1958; Becker & Geer, 1971). For example, listing the community relations activities of the school occurred during the initial analysis; it was derived directly from the data and did not require any inferences. Comparing the schools in terms of the variety and frequency of CR activities and making some judgments about the schools based on this was somewhat inferential. Analysing the CR activities in terms of, for example, who initiates them, who controls them, what role is assigned to the parents, whether or not they concern educational issues, whether they are specific or general in nature, etc., and making judgments about the schools on the basis of these analyses was much more inferential. A clear distinction is made in the report between analyses involving low levels of inference and those involving high levels.

Document Analysis

For every document examined, information about the author, the intended audience, the message, the type of document, the date and other contextual factors was recorded. In addition, more inferential information such as the author's purpose, the tone, assumptions about the receiver, etc. was also recorded.

Data from documents were used primarily to: (a) prepare chronologies of the implementation of the two policies (see Tables C-1 to C-6 in Appendix C); (b) identify major issues and concerns (see Tables 4-3 & 4-4); and (c) draw inferences about attitudes and value.

The chronologies were referred to during interviews, mainly to obtain information about an event -- circumstances surrounding it, why it occurred, consequences, etc. -- if such information had not been volunteered by the respondent. Also, the chronologies were useful in preparing the narrative descriptions of the implementation of the two policies.

Identifying major issues and concerns from the documents allowed comparison with those identified by the respondents during the interviews. This information is also useful in preparing the narrative descriptions.

Inferences about values and attitudes drawn from documents were used to validate those expressed by the respondents or inferred from interview data.

Observations

Observation data were used essentially to validate interview data, and thus were sorted into similar categories. For example, one category of interview data was ways in which the school is open to the public -- there was a similar category of observation data.

Trustworthiness of Findings

Defining the Issues

It is incumbent upon researchers to persuade their audiences that the data obtained and the inferences drawn are authentic, trustworthy. It is on these grounds -- the failure to meet the traditional tests of rigor (namely, internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity) -- that naturalistic inquiry is most frequently criticized. Kenny and Grotelueschen (1980) argue that naturalistic inquiry should be justified on pragmatic grounds, that is, on the superiority of this paradigm over traditional educational research to make sense of findings in terms of the context, to be responsive to the complex environment, and to convey an holistic and dynamically rich amount of the phenomenon under study. They further argue that advocating

> this pragmatic foundation would allow for a complete reinterpretation of such basic concepts as validity, reliability, generalizability, and so on. Rather than attempt to meet these challenges, or the implicit assumptions of a correspondence theory underlying traditional educational research, they could be conceptually rebuilt on the criterion of workability, in the true Kuhnian meaning of paradigm building. (pp. 38 & 39)

Guba and Lincoln (1981, pp. 103-127) have attempted this reinterpretation. They suggest that four basic concerns related to the trustworthiness of findings have evolved, namely:

1. Truth Value: How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects with which -- and the context within which -- the inquiry was carried out?

2. Applicability: How can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects?

3. Consistency: How can one determine whether the findings of

an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects in the same (or a similar) context?

4. Neutrality: How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of subjects and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, and so on of the inquirer?

In the scientific paradigm, these issues have been labelled internal validity, external validity or generalizability, reliability, and objectivity, and appropriate procedures have been developed to reduce threats to them. Guba and Lincoln suggest that the analogous terms in the naturalistic paradigm are credibility, fittingness, auditability, and comfirmability (see Table 3-8). Although not as well codified as those in the scientific paradigm, procedures do exist for increasing the trustworthiness of naturalistic findings. These are listed in Table 3-9 and described in the following sections.

Truth Value - Credibility

Because naturalistic inquiry is conducted in a real-life context, techniques must be utilized which will facilitate the difficult task of interpretation while preserving its holistic nature. Simplification of the context will necessarily occur, but not to the extent that the findings are no longer meaningful or credible to the participants and to others familiar with similar contexts. That, in

Table 3-8

Four Aspects of the Trustworthiness of Findings

Aspect	Corresponding Terms from the Scientific Paradigm	Corresponding Terms from the Naturalistic Paradigm
truth value	internal validity	credibility
applicability	generalizability	fittingness
consistency	reliability	auditability
neutrality	objectivity	confirmability

Source: Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.104.

fact, is the critical test of credibility. In this study six strategies were utilized to reduce threats to credibility.

Prolonged engagement. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Smith, 1978; Spradley, 1979). Prolonged engagement in the field is advised in order to overcome distortions produced by the researcher's presence, to uncover the researcher's biases, and to develop and test hypotheses. The major data collecting portion of this inquiry was carried out during the six month period from school recommencement after the Christmas holidays to the end of the school year in June (see Table 3-2). Data were collected on nearly every work day of this period, with the number of hours per day spent in the field varying from two or three to over ten, but typically ranging from four to six hours.

Peer debriefing. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Miles, 1979). Discussion of the findings with others who are familiar with similar contexts and with the theoretical issues is frequently recommended as a means of testing insights, challenging interpretations, identifying new directions for inquiry, and determining whether or not there is a need for further confirming/negating evidence. In this study the dissertation committee served as the debriefing panel.

Triangulation. (Denzin, 1978b; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Jick,

Table 3-9

Naturalistic Treatment of Trustworthiness Issues

Strategies	Trustworthiness Issues: Credibility	Fittingness	Auditability	Confirmability
prolonged engagement	*			*
peer debriefing	*			*
triangulation	*		*	*
member checks	*			*
referential materials	*			
structural corroboration	*			
thick descriptions		*		
purposive sampling				*
dependability audit			*	
reflexivity				*
confirmability audit				*
credibility tests				*

1979; Sieber, 1973; Smith, 1978; Trend, 1979; Yin, 1981). Triangulation involves collecting data from different sources, in different situations, and using different techniques in order to obtain corroboration for all the findings. The greater the convergence among the data collected, the more plausible are the findings. If the data diverge, but this divergence can be accounted for, then it is possible that some interesting aspect of the phenomenon has been uncovered. The triangulation techniques employed in this study were discussed in previous sections of this chapter. To recapitulate, they involve different data sources (e.g., School Board members, Central Office staff, principals, and teachers), different data collecting methods (e.g., interviews, observations, document analysis, questionnaire), and different data collecting situations (e.g., Board meetings, Parent Advisory Council meetings, staffrooms, offices, and the like).

Member checks. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Miles, 1979; Spradley, 1979). Obviously it is important to test data and interpretations with the participants in order to identify factual errors and also genuinely alternative interpretations. Member checks were done during the formal interviews by seeking clarification and elaboration whenever necessary and by summarizing to the respondent's satisfaction at the end of each topic. It was done informally as well, during casual conversation.

Referential adequacy materials. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Spradley, 1979). It must be possible to back up assertions with referential materials. In this study they include: field notes made during interviews and observations; audiotapes of the interviews; meeting agendas and minutes; reports; policy statements; memos; board publications; school bulletins and newsletters; and notes of other written documents. Support for assertions is provided by quotes from interviews, anecdotes from observation data, excerpts from documents, and tabulations of the frequency and distribution of the phenomenon.

Structural corroboration. (Campbell, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Smith, 1978; Trend, 1979; Yin, 1981). Structural corroboration involves ensuring that there is no internal conflict among the data and interpretations, and then linking the findings to build a cohesive explanation. In this study the use of triangulation techniques and the design of the data summary sheets helped to accomplish the first aspect of structural corroboration; and adopting a case study approach helped to accomplish the second, for proponents of the case study (Campbell, 1979; Eckstein, 1975; Kenny & Grotelueschen, 1980; Simeon, 1976; Yin, 1980) argue that its utility lies in its ability to explain a phenomenon in a natural context. The process of building explanations has been likened to pattern matching, and according to Campbell it provides a major source of discipline or controls to the case study research design:

> In a case study done by an alert social scientist who has thorough local acquaintance, the theory he uses to explain the focal difference also generates predictions or expectations on dozens of other aspects of the culture, and he does not retain the theory unless most of these are also confirmed. In some sense, he has tested the theory with degrees of freedom coming from the multiple implications of any one theory. The process is a kind of pattern-matching in which there are many aspects of the pattern demanded by theory that are available for matching with his observations on the local setting. (Campbell, 1979, p. 57)

Applicability - Fittingness

Because of the naturalistic assumptions about the nature of truth statements, with their emphasis on the influence of the context on a phenomenon, there is concern about the comparability, or rather the non-comparability, of findings from different sites. Researchers in the naturalistic paradigm do not seek enduring, context-free generalizations. Commenting on the short half-life of many empirical propositions, especially those involving social systems, Cronbach (1975) said:

> It is as if we needed a gross of dry cells to power an engine and could only make one a month. The energy would leak out of the first cells before we had half the battery completed. So it is with the potency of our generalizations. (p. 122)

Instead, the emphasis is on the transferability or applicability of findings from one site to another, depending on the degree of "fit" or similarity between the two contexts. To ensure context-relevancy of the findings and to increase the possibility of making informed judgments concerning transferability of findings, the collection of "thick" descriptive data was used in this study.

"Thick" descriptive data. (Geertz, 1973; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Mintzberg, 1979a). Thick description refers not only to description of events, circumstances, setting, and characteristics of the people involved, but also interpretation of these demographic and descriptive data in terms of the norms, attitudes, values, and the like prevalent in the context. The purpose of collecting thick descriptions is to permit others to judge the degree of similarity between the research site and other sites, and thus the extent to which the findings are transferable. The debriefing sessions by the dissertation committee ensured the adequacy of the data and their presentation in this respect.

Consistency - Auditability

Because naturalistic research generally involves emergent rather than preordinate data collecting and analysing techniques and because it relies so heavily on the inquirer as the major data collecting instrument, the issue of the replicability of the findings arises. Consistency is not defined solely in terms of the invariance of findings. Some variance is expected -- for example, participants' perspectives on the issues may change, there may be some environmental changes or the inquirer may develop better insights -- but the source of this variance must be identified and accounted for. It must be attributable not to poor research strategies, but to the context. In other words, the naturalistic inquirer defines consistency in terms of both invariance and trackable variance. Two major techniques for ensuring dependability of findings were utilized in this study.

Triangulation. This strategy was discussed previously, in the credibility section. Convergence of data helped to establish the invariance of the findings; divergence suggested possible sources of invariance.

Dependability audit. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Spradley, 1979). A dependability audit involves: (a) collecting evidence to show how the data were collected and analysed, how interpretations were made, and the like, (b) presenting the evidence; and (c) inviting others to examine the evidence in terms of generally accepted practice. Again the dissertation committee served as the external auditors of the study.

Neutrality - Confirmability

Because in naturalistic research the inquirer is the major data collecting instrument and there is interaction between the inquirer and the respondents, there is the danger of bias. It is necessary to establish the extent to which the findings are a function of the respondents and of the conditions of the inquiry and to identify and account for the influence of the investigator.

Murphy (1980) suggests that there are three main sources of bias and error:

1. those originating with the researcher -- these most commonly include: (a) the use of inappropriate methods or exclusive reliance on one method; (b) his or her predispositions, feelings, beliefs, values, expectations, and the like; and (c) ignorance of the norms, customs, and traditions of the system being investigated. Five safeguards against these sources of bias and error were used in this study.

Triangulation. This strategy and its use in the study have been described previously. In particular, it provides safeguards against the bias and error originating in any one data collecting method by looking for convergence of findings produced by different methods.

Peer debriefing. This strategy and its use in the study have been described previously. It assumes that it is easier for others to detect bias on the part of the researcher, bias of which he or she may be unaware.

Member checks. This strategy and its use in the study have been decribed previously. Frequent checking with the participants to ensure that their accounts have been accurately recorded minimizes distortion due to researcher bias.

Practice of reflexivity. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Murphy, 1980; Spradley, 1979). The practice of reflexivity involves self-examination and self-awareness on the part of the researcher in order to reveal his or her biases and the effect these may have on the data collection and analysis. In this study reviewing the audiotapes to evaluate interviewing techniques proved to be a worthwhile exercise. For example, it was found in the first couple of interviews that the introduction section was too short, so that the respondents were not sufficiently prepared to provide appropriate and relevant information. Also, the pause after each response was cut short, creating a rather rushed atmosphere and perhaps interrupting the respondent's flow of thought. Another problem was the repeating or rephrasing of questions if the respondent did not reply quickly, again possibly interrupting his or her train of thought and even suggesting their replies had not been adequate. Reviewing the tapes to assess the pace of the interview, the amount of inquirer talk/interruptions, the relevance and clarity of the questions, and the like helped to improve the interviewing techniques and to reduce bias due to the interview situation and the interviewer-respondent interaction.

Confirmability audits. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The purpose of the confirmability audit is to have an external examiner certify that interpretations are supported by existing data and that they were made in ways consistent with the data. Again the dissertation committee served as the external auditors.

2. those originating with the respondent -- The utility of interview data depends on the ability of the respondent to give accurate and complete information about events and processes. Triangulation is one safeguard against these sources of bias and error. In addition, both the behaviour of the respondent and the account itself were examined.

Notes were made during the interview, and completed afterwards, on the nonverbal behaviour of the respondent such as gestures, facial expressions, hesitancies, changes in tone of voice, and the like. These notes were used to draw inferences about the respondent's attitude to the interviewer and the interview situation and the effect this might have on the data collected. For example, one respondent borrowed all three of the interviewer's pencils early in the interview, and managed to deposit them in other parts of the room or break the lead. I concluded that the respondent was not comfortable in the interview situation, and so made no attempt to tape the interview or record notes (the notes were done from memory immediately afterwards). Instead, all recording materials were set aside and the respondent was encouraged to talk about his role in general terms. The interview was not directed towards the policies under study until the respondent appeared more relaxed. On the other hand, another respondent sat half-turned away from the interviewer, head lowered and eyes focused on his hands. He maintained this position for over an hour and spoke with almost no probing (we had discussed the study several times previously, so he was familiar with its purpose). This behaviour was interpreted as evidence of thought and concentration.

Examination of the account involved asking a series of questions about it before making a global assessment of its plausibility and credibility. These included: is the account internally consistent? is it consistent with other accounts? is it a firsthand account or is it based on hearsay? does the level of certainty vary? how detailed is it? and the like.

3. those originating with the situation -- Included here are "reactivity" due to the personal characteristics and/or role of the investigator and "omission" due to the impossibility of interviewing everyone, observing everywhere, and reading everything. Two strategies were employed in this study to provide safeguards against these sources of bias and error.

Prolonged engagement helps to neutralize reactivity, as was discussed previously.

Purposive sampling helps to prevent important omissions. A description of how the policies, the sites, and the respondents were selected was provided earlier in the chapter.

Concluding Comment

Because the use of the naturalistic paradigm, with the consequent heavy reliance on qualitative data, is still relatively new in educational research, this chapter describing the methodology is somewhat lengthy. An attempt has been made to explain as thoroughly and as clearly as possible how the data collection and analysis were carried out and what steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL: INFLUENCING THE SCHOOLS DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY

One important, and somewhat unexpected, finding to emerge from this study is the school-based, school-specific nature of policy implementation. This does not mean, however, that the School Board and the senior administrators do not play a role in the process. This chapter contains a description of those activities carried out at the district level, for the most part by central office staff, that are related to the implementation of the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies, and discusses how they may influence the school's implementation activities. Before examining implementation at the district level, however, a brief introduction to the school district and the community it serves is in order.

The School District

The Community

According to one of the informational brochures published by Lyttefield School District, "the municipality of Lyttefield is in the centre of the most heavily populated area in Western Canada". Its nearly 40 square miles are bounded by cities on two sides and bodies of water on the other two, and is inhabited by over 125,000 people,

about 25% of whom speak English as a second language. The community is comprised of several distinct neighbourhoods which differ in age and a number of socioeconomic status variables (as will be illustrated in the next chapter, when describing the setting of the four participating schools), yet in spite of its heterogeneity, Lyttefield is relatively free of controversy, especially compared to some of the surrounding communities.

Schools and Programs

Lyttefield was incorporated in the late 1800's, and the first school was opened just two years later. By 1980 the school district operated 53 schools, enrolling over 20,000 full-time students and nearly 17,000 students in continuing education programs. Enrollments started to decline, however, and during the course of this study several schools were closed. At this time there are 45 schools, 36 elementary and 9 secondary. Four of the elementary schools are community schools, and a fifth has just been designated a community school. The number of full-time students has dropped to 18,000, although the continuing education program has risen to almost 20,000 registrants. The district employs about 1,100 teachers, 500 continuing education instructors, and 450 non-teaching staff, and has an operating budget of well over 60 million dollars.

The School Board

In 1977, when the community relations policy was approved, the Board was composed of five people. (The size of the Board is now seven, and elections are held every two years to coincide with municipal elections.) Three of the Trustees belonged to the Lyttefield Action League (LAL), and the other two were members of the Lyttefield Organization of Concerned Citizens (LOCC). While LAL can be described as leaning to the left of center and LOCC as leaning to the right of center, in practice partly affiliation does not appear to make as much difference as might be expected. For example, Robinson and Hansen (1981) found that the differences between the educational attitudes and opinions of LAL and LOCC candidates were not as large as those between candidates of different parties in other districts; and LaRocque (1981) found that the decision-making behaviour of trustees was less affected by party affiliation in Lyttefield than in a neighbouring city. This relative lack of party differences was also evident during the Fall 1981 electoral campaign, which occurred just before the start of this study.

At the time of dissolution in 1981 the Board consisted of four LOCC trustees, three of whom ran for re-election, and three LAL trustees, one of whom ran again. All four incumbents were returned to office, and the other three seats were filled by LOCC candidates. Thus the Board now consists of six LOCC trustees and one LAL trustee. There are four women on the Board, and the occupational backgrounds of the Trustees include: a housewife, two teachers, a principal, an accountant, an administrator, and a businessman.

The Officials and Senior Administrators

The officials include the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent, and the Secretary-Treasurer. These three men comprise the "Administrative Services". There are two other services in addition to the Administrative Services: the Business Services, consisting of the Secretary-Treasurer and the various senior administrators (ie., the department managers) under him; and the Education Services, consisting of the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent, and the senior administrators, namely, the Assistant Superintendent (Secondary Instruction), the Assistant Superintendent (Elementary Instruction), and the Director of Community Education. All these men have held their position for five or more years, except the Assistant Superintendent (Elementary Instruction), who had just been appointed at the start of this study. He has, however, worked in the district as a teacher and a principal for many years. The Deputy Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer are not in analogous positions, for although the senior administrators in the Business Services are responsible to the Secretary-Treasurer, the senior administrators in the Education Services report to the Superintendent, not the Deputy Superintendent, although they frequently work with him. Each of these men has one or more coordinators working under him, and the Deputy Superintendent is also responsible for the Education Center.

Implementation Activities

Given this brief introduction to the setting, the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies, their background and development, and district implementation activities can be described. The focus throughout is the potential effect of district activities on school activities.

The Community Relations Policy

Policy Background and Development

When the newly elected Board, with its LAL majority, met in January 1977 its Chairman immediately introduced a draft of the community relations policy (CR policy) for the Board's consideration. The creation of such a policy had been part of the LAL election platform, and it was a personal concern of the Chairman. He felt that citizens and community groups received "shabby treatment" from the Board, and that they were held at "arm's length". For example, there was not a schedule of Board meetings; Board meetings were held in a very tiny room, which could seat at most six members of the public; and much of the agenda was discussed in private. In other words, it was very difficult for a citizen to discover what was happening in the district. The extent of this problem was highlighted by a letter from the Lyttefield Parent-Teacher Council, which the Board received at this time.

Both the policy draft and the letter from the Parent-Teacher Council were referred to the committee of the whole, and two and one-half months later the Board approved the policy. The various steps in the development of the policy are outlined in Table C-1 (see Appendix C).

The policy consists of two parts, a combined preamble and policy statement, and a list of objectives related to the policy statement. The first part of the policy reads as follows:

> The Lyttefield School Board recognizes the importance of public involvement in education. The Board endorses an attitude of openness, recognizes the right of citizens to full, objective and timely information, and welcomes individual and group opinions, suggestions and questions regarding school affairs.
>
> IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE EFFECTIVE, SYSTEMATIC TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND WITH THE CITIZENS OF LYTTEFIELD AND TO MAKE FREELY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AND POLICIES SO THAT THE COMMUNITY CAN EXERCISE ITS RIGHT TO INFLUENCE THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOLS AND SO THAT CITIZENS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO AND INFLUENCE EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS.

It can be seen that the policy focuses on two aspects of public involvement - the right of citizens to obtain information and the right of citizens to influence decisions. The thirteen objectives, which were designed to help the Board "achieve the intent of its policy", also refer to these two aspects of public involvement: seven describe ways to increase public access to information and six describe ways to increase public input. While twelve of the objectives have been worded so as to specify activities at the Board or district level, three specifically mention activities at the school level. Thus any discussion of the implementation of the community relations policy must take in to consideration the "aspect of public involvement" and the "level of activity". The distribution of the objectives according to these two dimensions is shown below:

LEVEL OF ACTIVITY	ASPECT OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	
	obtaining information	influencing decisions
Board/District	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9	3, 5, 10, 11, 12
School	9	11, 13

The seven objectives concerning Board or district activities which promote the right of the public to obtain information are listed in Table 4-1, along with an assessment of the extent to which each has been implemented. A chronology of activities related to the implementation of these objectives, derived mainly from the Superintendent's files and the minutes of Board meetings, is contained in Table C-2 (Appendix C). Similarly, the five objectives concerning

Table 4-1

Extent of Implementation of Policy Objectives Related to Aspect of Public Involvement: Obtaining Information Level of Activity: Board/District

Objective	Extent of Implementation
4. To provide the public with an opportunity to address questions to the Board of School Trustees at each regular meeting.	full
8. To make freely available and to provide upon request, within reasonable time, documents and information ... in the "public domain".	full
1. To hold regular meetings of the board in an open manner before assembled public and press who shall have the benefit of a publicised schedule of meetings.	partial
6. To send agendas of regular meetings to the associations representing the Board's employees, to parent organizations in the District and to groups and individuals requesting such agendas.	partial
7. To publicize the deliberations and decisions of the Board meetings by distributing an approved report of board meetings to all School Board employees and parent organizations in the District and by making the report and minutes of Board meetings available upon request.	partial
9. To develop and maintain a regular community relations and information program ... and to encourage individual schools to do the same.	partial
2. To hold regular meetings of the Board periodically in various locations in the District.	none

Board or district activities which promote the right of the public to influence decisions, and an assessment of the extent of their implementation, are given in Table 4-2, followed by a chronology of implementation activities in Table C-3 (see Appendix C). While these Board and district activities are important in their own right, they are equally important for the cues they give the school concerning the priority of and the interpretation of the policy. It is from this latter perspective that they are discussed in the next section.

Influencing Schools Indirectly

There are several features of the district implementation of the community relations policy that may have cued the schools: the differential rate of implementation of the twelve policy objectives; the shift in meaning attributed to the terms public information, openness, and public involvement; and the change in emphasis from the district level to the school level.

Differential rate of implementation. Implementation has been quickest and most complete on objectives 4, 5, and 8, all of which require the establishment of procedures rather than the active involvement of Board members (see Tables 4-1 and 4-2). On the other hand, objectives 2, 11, and 12 have not been implemented, and they are all behavioural rather than procedural in nature, involving Board interaction with the public. This same pattern of

Table 4-2

Extent of Implementation of Policy Objectives Related to
Aspect of Public Involvement: Influencing Decisions
Level of Activity: Board/District

Objective	Extent of Implementation
5. To welcome delegations of students, parents, teachers and others at regular Board meetings.	full
3. To hold public forums in various locations in the District on educational issues from time to time as the need arises.	partial
10. To develop an advisory process so that the community can advise the Board from the public point of view on such matters as the Board may deem necessary.	partial
11. To establish a service to assist citizens in expressing their concerns to schools, School Board personnel, or to the Board.	none
12. To establish a regular means of assessing the public's parents', and students' needs and concerns regarding Lyttefield School System.	none

procedural changes preceding behavioural ones is evident in the partial implementation of objectives 1, 6, and 7.

There is another aspect to the differential rate of implementation of the policy objectives -- implementation has been quicker and more complete when the objectives involve making information available to the public rather than receiving input from the public. For example, the Community Relations Committee, which was established early in 1977, is responsible for all the public relations activities of the Board and the District, and any matter concerning community relations in general which is referred to it by the Board. The issues discussed at the committee meetings and included in its reports are listed in Table 4-3. Much of the committee's time is spent on the newsletter, the informational brochures, community television programming, and the presentation of tax information to the public, and on encouraging schools to develop active community relations programs.

Thus the Board has pursued many different avenues to keep the public informed. When it comes to soliciting public input, however, the situation is somewhat different. We have seen already that objectives in this category, namely, objectives 11 1nd 12 have not been implemented at all. Two others, objectives 3 and 10, have been implemented only partially.

This examination of the differential rate of implementation of the policy objectives at the district level suggests that the Board

Table 4-3

Issues Raised in Community Relations Commitee Reports

Issue	Meeting 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Total
newsletter	*	*	*			*	*			*		*	*		*	*	*	*	*		*		14
"Facts" & "Welcome" brochures		*					*				*				*	*					*	*	8
community relations at the school level										*	*		*	*	*	*			*			*	8
community television programming					*		*				*					*		*				*	6
tax information									*	*				*	*	*				*			6
community relations budget		*		*									*			*							4
"Board Briefs"/news release											*					*					*	*	4
"Teens in Education"																*		*	*				3
students at Board meetings																*	*	*					3
review of community relations policy implementation								*								*							2
official logo													*			*							2
sound system in Board room										*	*												2
Board elections		*	*																				2
slide-tape presentation										*		*											2
recognition of retiring staff																	*						1
public question period	*																						1
district signs																		*					1
clipping service																*							1
distribution of agendas											*												1
board members business cards		*																					1
recognition of "Volunteer Week"																*							1

(a) has made procedural but not behavioural changes, and (b) places much emphasis on publications and other modes of communicating to the public, but has apparently made little effort to discover community opinion and to assess community needs. It assumes that if anyone has a concern, he will make it known to the appropriate person. The Board seems to have adopted a passive role with respect to these objectives -- one of being willing to listen to what the community has to say, but not of actively finding out what the community feels or of establishing an advisory process.

Redefinition of terms. One term which has undergone a change in meaning is "public information". The policy statement and preamble emphasize "the right of citizens to full, objective, and timely information" and "to make freely available information about programs, practices and policies". Yet soon after the policy was implemented, the emphasis was on public relations. Much of the activity of the Community Relations Committee centres on publications and other media presentations (e.g., slide-tape packages, Community Television). The concern is to tell the public, especially those who do not have children in the schools, about the programs, about the quality of education in Lyttefield, and so gain or maintain their support. While this is an understandable goal, it is not what was originally intended.

Closely related to this shift from public information to public relations is the redefinition of the term "openness". Originally it referred to freedom of information, as explained above. Now it means warmth. To quote the Community Relations Coordinator,

> I think we have tried to create an atmosphere of openness and warmth at the Board, part of that being the procedural by-law allowing for question periods, having the agendas available to the public, having a coffee break in which the trustees can mingle and discuss informally things, publicizing well in advance.... people who attended our meetings have said our Board is very open and they're very at home. And people who attend meetings for the first time are very surprised at the openness. I guess a lot of it has to do with the Chairman, who greets them, and thanks them for coming, and the fact that we have a coffee break, they feel pretty good about that.

A more subtle shift in meaning has been accomplished through the linking of community relations with community education. This has been brought about in part by the creation of the position of Community Relations Coordinator who also works part time in the community education department. There was a need to have a single person responsible for the Board publications, because contract work and committee work both proved unsuccessful. The Superintendent argued that it was logical for the community education department to encompass communications and community relations. It also seems, however, that community education was a growing concern -- it reaches as many students as the regular programs, it is a means of keeping teachers employed, and it receives governmental funding. The Superintendent had asked previously for another appointment to the community education department which had not been approved, so the creation of the Community Relations Coordinator position satisfied both parties -- the Board was assured that its publications would be issued, and the community education department received an additional staff member.

The responsibilities of the Community Relations Coordinator with respect to the community relations policy focus essentially on Board publications, assisting schools with their publications, maintaining good relations with the press, and presentation of information through other media (e.g. Community Television). In other words, the Community Relations Coordinator is only responsible for the implementation of a limited aspect of the policy. What has happened, however, is that the position has become identified with the entire policy. Whenever anyone asks a question about the policy, he or she is am immediately referred to the Community Relations Coordinator by both central office staff and Board members. It is not that others are not willing to answer my questions, it is that the Community Relations Coordinator is seen as the "expert". This has two potential consequences -- other people, the school board members in particular, do not feel a personal responsibility for the implementation of the policy because there is someone else whose responsibility it is, and the other aspects of the policy are neglected. In addition, relating the community relations policy to community education has resulted in another definition of the term "public involvement", one which equates public involvement with participation in the community education program. The rationale is that if people feel that they are being served by the education system, even if they do not have children in the schools, they will have a positive attitude toward it and will support it. This may be true, and community education may be an important part of the education system, but it has little to do with the rights of citizens to obtain information and influence decisions.

School-level emphasis. The community relations policy is directed mainly at district level activities, yet soon after its passage the Board expressed concern about community relations at the school level. There was a decided shift in emphasis from district activities to school activities (see Tables C-4 and C-5 in Appendix C). This brings us to the Board's efforts to influence the schools directly. The schools' responses are discussed in the next chapter.

Influencing Schools Directly

Immediately after the approval of the Community Relations policy, the Superintendent sent a copy of the policy and the following memo to all schools:

> SUBJECT: PUBLIC RELATIONS
>
> Education appears to be assailed from all sides by criticism. A large proportion of this expressed displeasure is founded in misinformation or lack of information. It has become increasingly obvious that the credibility of education is a function of the nature of our relations with the public.

The Board approved a "Policy on Public Information and Community Relations" which stated:

IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE EFFECTIVE, SYSTEMATIC TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION WITH THE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND WITH THE CITIZENS OF LYTTEFIELD AND TO MAKE FREELY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AND POLICIES SO THAT THE COMMUNITY CAN EXERCISE ITS RIGHT TO INFLUENCE THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOLS AND SO THAT CITIZENS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO AND INFLUENCE EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS.

In keeping with this policy the Board committed itself to a number of objectives which establish the basis for the development of district public relations activity. While some of the objectives have to do more directly with information distribution and Board activity, there are definite implications for staff at the school level.

It is requested that the following be undertaken in each school:

1. Considerations of the new "Policy on Public Information and Community Relations" by the school staff.
2. A review of the school's activities and processes regarding its relations with the public.
3. Full discussion of the policy as it relates to what could be done in each school to relate to the public positively and openly.

It is recognized that the most critical relationship with the public is between teacher, student and with the parents of the students. It is expected that staff will nurture a positive liaison with parents and the community by participating in open informative school community relations. The development of such endeavours is encouraged.

A copy of the Board's new policy and the concomitant objectives is attached for consideration by staff.

The Board indicated its concern about the community relations program of schools at several meetings, and this was followed up by a Principals' Meeting devoted to this issue, a workshop on community relations to which every school sent two representatives (the principal and one teacher), and the provision of some funds for school newsletters.

The Board first endorsed the creation of school parent advisory councils in March 1977. When in May 1979 it became apparent that many schools had not yet established such a committee, the Board again showed it strong support for them. Inservice activities were provided at a special all-day Principals' Meeting. When it appeared that schools were still reluctant to establish parent advisory committees, the Board approved the following policy in March 1980:

> Consistent with its policy on Public Information and Community Relations the Board affirms its desire that schools develop a close, open, two-way liaison between the school and the parents of the school community.
>
> It shall be the policy of the Board that each school establish an ongoing mechanism and process which provides for consultation with and input by the parents in regard to the program and general operations which are the responsibility of the school and its administrative and teaching staff. It shall be incumbent upon the school to initiate such a process or to respond positively to initiatives by the parent community, ensuring that the opportunity to participate is publicized, open to all and that positions on any constituted body are representative of the community, and subject to annual review at an annual open meeting. The form of the parent-school body shall be at the discretion of the local school-home community.
>
> The composition and operations of any such a joint parent-school body shall have the following objectives:

> 1. To promote positive two-way communication between the home and the school in regard to the sound education of students.
>
> 2. To enhance understanding of the parents and school staff in regard to promoting positive school climate and a productive school experience for students.
>
> 3. To provide the parent-school body, committees or advisory council with the opportunity to affiliate with peer bodies such as Parent-Teacher Council, B.C. Home and School Federation, Community School Associations, or any other peer body which fosters the objectives of public school education.

Subsequent reports have shown an increase in the number of parent advisory committees, although in the spring of 1982 ten percent of the schools still did not have one.

Summary

Even though policy implementation is essentially school-based and school-specific, the district can influence the school, both directly and indirectly. In the case of the community relations policy, the Board attempted to influence the schools directly, by creating a policy which mandated parent advisory committees, by requesting periodic reports on the status of these committees, by advocating the use of workshops to help school personnel acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for the implementation of the policy, and by making funds available for newsletters. It may have influenced schools indirectly, by emphasizing the provision of information over the elicitation of public input, and public relations activities over public involvement activities.

The elementary school self-assessment policy has a background very different from that of the community relations policy, especially in the involvement of school personnel in its development. The implementation of the Ministry directive on elementary school self-assessment clearly illustrates the necessity of developing conceptual clarity about the intent of policy and the time required for this to occur. It may be at this level that district influence is greatest, and so the description of the activities of the elementary school self-assessment committee focuses on its attempts to develop conceptual clarity.

The Elementary School Self-Assessment Policy

Policy Background

In August 1979 the Ministry of Education issued Schools Department Circular 92 in order to inform school districts that "By December, 1981, the Ministry expects each school district to establish a policy on elementary school self-assessment." While the Ministry did not place any restrictions on the elementary school self-assessment policy established in each district, it did define some of the parameters of the process and provide a framework for designing the assessment instruments which probably influenced the deliberations of the districts. This certainly appear to be the case in Lyttefield.

District Response to Circular 92

Lyttefield School District responded to circular 92 by establishing a committee consisting of nine members: three representatives of the central office staff, three of the Lyttefield Association of School Administrators (LASA), and three of the Lyttefield Teachers Association (LTA). The central office representatives were selected by virtue of their position - the Deputy Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent (Elementary Instruction), and the Coordinating Principal (Elementary); the principals were asked to sit on the committee by the LASA executive or by the Superintendent; the teachers were elected by LTA school representatives at a general meeting.

"Democratic procedures" and "participative decision-making" are highly valued in the district -- in fact, they were mentioned by nearly every respondent in describing the district -- and committees comprised of representatives of the employee groups are seen as a way of ensuring both. Thus the request to establish an elementary school self-assessment policy did not pose procedural problems for the district, there were numerous precedents for the response.

The Policy

The draft of the policy was presented to the committee for consideration early in 1982 (see Table C-6 in Appendix C for the chronology of the development of the policy). It had been written, oddly enough, by the committee's most recent member, the newly appointed Assistant Superintendent. The previous one had left for a superintendency in another district. In spite of his short tenure on the committee, about two months, he prepared a policy statement which reflected the thrust of the committee's deliberations and which met with its approval. A copy of the draft policy was distributed to all principals, accompanied by the following memo from the superintendent:

> The Ministry of Education has directed each school district to develop a policy on elementary school assessment. In this District a committee composed of central office staff and representatives of the Lyttefield Association of School Administrators and Lyttefield Teachers' Association has worked for the past year developing a draft policy statement, together with self-assessment materials designed to supplement those published by the Ministry.
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> The enclosed draft policy has been presented to the Board of School Trustees at its meeting of 1982.03.09 at which time it approved the recommendation that the draft policy be circulated to elementary schools and the professional associations for their consideration and reaction.
>
> It would now be appreciated if principals and teachers, and the professional associations would peruse the draft policy and provide this office with their reaction and input. In the interim the committee will continue its work on support materials with the object of completing these before the end of the current school year. The Ministry expects the school-based assessment process to begin in the 1982-83 school year.

There was very little feedback from the schools, and no changes were made before submitting the following policy to the Board for approval on June 6, 1982:

> Preamble:
> Clearsighted self-scrutiny and analysis are major agents of growth. They also enhance sensitivity to changing conditions and needs, and their careful practice is a professional responsibility of all who are involved in the schooling of young people. In particular, the use of good self-assessment practices in the elementary schools of the district is seen as a means of promoting positive change, of protecting and fostering excellence, of encouraging collegiality and staff cohesion, and of stimulating professional growth.
>
> POLICY
>
> IT SHALL THEREFORE BE THE POLICY OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES OF LYTTEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT THE DISTRICT'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WILL ENGAGE IN A REGULAR, ONGOING PROCESS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT.
>
> The implementation of this policy will be governed by the following principles and considerations:
>
> 1. The elementary school assessment process is intended to be formative rather than summative, and the process and eventual recommendations should reflect this assumption.
> 2. Conditions and priorities vary, and it is expected that the processes adopted will often differ somewhat from school to school.
> 3. A school is not a closed system and the wider community will frequently constitute an important resource.
> 4. Since any good self-assessment model is both arduous and time-consuming, it is recognized that staffs will on occasion require additional resources.
> 5. To ensure that the self-assessment process does not become an empty exercise, the Board and school staff recognize that both have a responsibility to examine and, where practicable, implement the recommendations.

6. Because of the rigorous demands of a good assessment process, what is attempted in a single year should be tailored to match the resources available.

The policy preamble, statement, and principles were accompanied by the following guidelines for implementation:

1. By 1982.11.30 schools will be expected to submit to the superintendent's office a description of how they propose to begin the assessment process. It is further expected that the process will begin in the 1982-83 school year. By 1982.06.30 schools should have submitted a capsule outline of their plans for the overall assessment cycle.
2. Normally the process will follow a six-year cycle, with the possibility of one or more sections being addressed each year.
3. Staffs should consider using some of their non-instructional days for both familiarization and training and for planning and implementation.
4. Staffs are encouraged to use Ministry, and District-developed materials, making whatever modifications are necessary for their situations.
5. Extensive formal reports need not be filed as sections are completed, but staffs will be asked to submit any assessment process recommendations which may require Board assistance or approval.
6. Schools should not embark on the process until a cadre of staff have been trained. The district will make provision for appropriate training.
7. It is expected that the self-assessment process will be co-ordinated by a committee of staff. The principal should be a member of this committee.
8. Staffs should be careful not to over-extend themselves as they begin the process; for example, the first year should probably not comprise more than school climate, philosophy, and possibly one other section.

9. Whether or not the school involves an external team, it should attempt to build in some processes to assist in validating the accuracy of its self-assessment.

10. If an external team is utilized, the staff will have input as to its composition.

In the next section I explore how this policy emerged from the deliberations of the ESSA committee.

Committee Deliberations

In the interviews the committee members listed the major issues addressed by the committee, described the deliberations on each issue, and summarized the status of the deliberations at that time. The accounts were highly consistent, both with one another and with the meeting minutes, attesting to the cohesiveness of the group and the intensity with which they considered and reconsidered each issue.

The committee deliberations fell into three categories: committee operations; conceptualization of elementary school self-assessment; and school readiness for elementary school self-assessment (see Table 4-4).

The purpose of elementary school self-assessment was the first issue addressed by the committee. From its earliest meetings it defined this as improved programs and practices, increased effectiveness of schools, and professional growth. All the committee members used such phrases as "the beginning rather than the end of a process" and "the prelude to growth" in discussing the intent of elementary school

Table 4-4

Issues Raised at Elementary School Self-Assessment Committee Meetings

Issue	Meeting 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
I Committee Operations														
a) procedures	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●			8
b) pilot study						●							●	2
c) implementation										●			●	2
d) policy statement												●	●	
II Conceptualization of ESSA														
a) purpose	●	●				●					●		●	5
use of data		●	●			●			●	●				5
external examiners	●										●		●	3
b) components; relative importance			●	●	●	●			●					5
statement of philosophy/goals				●	●	●					●		●	5
community input				●		●							●	3
booklet content & format								●	●			●	●	4
c) staggered 6-year cycle	●					●					●		●	4
time requirements	●					●							●	3
d) flexibility	●					●					●		●	4
III Readiness for ESSA														
a) school climate		●		●	●	●			●		●		●	7
b) participants' attitudes		●	●							●	●			4

Note. ESSA = elementary school self-assessment self-assessment, and emphasized the differences between self-assessment and both accountability programs and teacher evaluation. The policy preamble expresses well the views of the committee on this issue.

Closely related to this first issue is that of use of data. The major concern of the committee was that the self-assessment process would become an "empty exercise" unless the collection of the assessment data was seen as only the first step, to be followed by analysis, development of recommendations for improvement, and implementation of these recommendations. Thus committee deliberations focused on the formative nature of the process, the responsibility of schools to implement the recommendations as fully as possible, and the responsibility of the district to support school efforts to implement the recommendations, all of which are reflected in principles 1 and 5 and guideline 5.

Although discussed only at a few meetings, the issue of external examiners was one of the first identified by the committee members during the interviews because they were having difficulty reaching consensus on it. On the one hand was the fear that the presence of an external review team would be harmful and dysfunctional by making teachers anxious and apprehensive and thus deflecting their concern from self-improvement to public image. On the other hand was the belief that an external review team would ensure the credibility of the data, and thus their utility, by functioning as "auditors". The uncertainty of the committee on this issue is reflected in guidelines 9 and 10.

Consideration of the components of self-assessment, and more importantly, of their relative importance, occupied much of the committee's time. Only one change was made to the Ministry's list of components, the addition of a section called school climate, which the committee considered to be one of its major accomplishments. By this the committee meant the readiness of the school staff for self-assessment, that is, the ability of the staff to discuss the issues, criticize constructively, and reach consensus. One of the subcommittees developed an instrument to measure these communication skills, and it was hoped that schools would complete this inventory first in order to determine whether or not they should work on communication skills before proceeding further. Guideline 8 suggests that school climate be one of the first sections attempted.

Another aspect of the school's readiness considered by the committee was the attitude of teachers to self-assessment. All committee members felt that the success of the policy depended on this, and frequently spoke of the need to "sell" teachers on the idea, so that they would "perceive it as a valuable tool", "become excited about using the materials", and "view self-assessment in a positive light". Guideline 6 addresses this issue.

The statement of philosophy was also identified as an essential component of self-assessment, although this was a highly contentious issue. It was resolved at one of the final meetings by giving schools the choice of: (a) writing their own statement of philosophy, assisted by the list of questions provided; (b) selecting the most appropriate statement of philosophy from those provided, modifying it if necessary; and (c) completing a goal priorizing exercise. The importance of this component is suggested by guideline 8.

At one time the list of the essential components included the school and community, and community input was considered to be an important element in the development of the school's statement of philosophy. The importance of the community is suggested in guideline 3, but not as strongly as in the committee deliberations, nor is the school and community booklet identified as one to be done in the first year.

From the beginning the committee members were concerned about the amount of time completion of the self-assessment booklets would require and the demands this would make on teachers. They feared that if the task were too time-consuming the quality of the data collection process might suffer and insufficient attention might be paid to developing and implementing recommendations. These concerns about time constraints are addressed in principles 4 and 6, and guidelines 2, 3 and 8.

Finally, the committee felt that the self-assessment process had to be sufficiently flexible to meet the different circumstances of each school. By flexibility was meant the freedom of the schools to decide how many sections they would attempt per year, the order in which they would complete the sections, and what materials they would use. In other words, the committee wanted the schools to be able to plan the most suitable self-assessment for their situation, a desire reflected in guidelines 1, 4, and 7.

Summary

Lyttefield has established procedures for policy making that enabled it to respond easily to Circular 92. The elementary school self-assessment committee, which was composed of three representatives from each of the central office, principal, and teacher groups, worked for over two years to develop the policy and the assessment materials. It spent by far the greatest amount of time on trying to conceptualize the meaning and process of self-assessment. Once the committee had achieved consensus on these issues, the actual writing of the policy and adaptation of Ministry materials took very little time. The committee also expressed concern frequently about the readiness of schools to engage in self-assessment, and the consequent importance of the introduction of the policy to school personnel and of the implementation strategies utilized by the district implementers. As interested as the committee members were in the implementation of the elementary school self-assessment process, however, they did not feel it was within their mandate to plan for or be involved in the implementation process.

Chapter Summary

In the cases of both the community relations policy and the elementary school self-assessment policy, the School Board and the senior administrators placed far greater emphasis on the development of the policy than on its implementation. The major implementation strategies utilized by the district staff were dissemination of information and workshops for two representatives from each school. In addition, several Principals' Meetings were devoted, in whole or in part, to discussion of the community relations policy; no doubt this would also have happened with the elementary school self-assessment policy.

These represent the efforts of the district to influence school implementation activities directly, but the district may exert an indirect influence as well. For example, the community relations activities of the Board members and of the central office staff clearly favour certain aspects of the policy over others, and this might serve as a model for school personnel. If the members of the elementary school self-assessment committee are involved in district implementation activities, then they will likely convey to school personnel a specific interpretation of the policy.

In the next chapter I describe the responses of the four schools to the community relations policy and to the attempts of the Board and the central office to influence their implementation activities.

CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTATION AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL: VARIATIONS ON A THEME

This chapter describes and analyses the community relations programs of the four participating schools, highlighting in particular the differences between these programs and the consistent pattern formed by these differences. The descriptions and analyses are derived largely from the interview data, supported and supplemented by written records and by observation. School level implementation of the elementary school self-assessment policy is not discussed here, because the policy was distributed to the schools only at the end of the study and they had received virtually no information about the policy and the materials prior to that time.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the participating schools and their settings.

The Schools and Their Settings

Table 5-1 presents some recent census data on the settings of the four schools. Of course, the census tracts and the school intake areas do not correspond exactly; the census data do, nevertheless, tell us something about the schools' settings.

Table 5-1

Features of the School Settings

Indicators	School			
	Thompson	Fraser	Columbia	Lyttefield
First language				
English	82%	72%	76%	73%
Chinese	3%	7%	6%	5%
Italian	1%	7%	3%	8%
other	14%	14%	15%	14%
Single parent families	18%	12%	9%	11%
Type of dwelling				
owned house	65%	66%	78%	64%
rented duplex/house	6%	17%	21%	11%
rented apartment	29%	17%	1%	25%

Note. Compiled by author from 1981 census data

Thompson Elementary

Thompson Elementary has opened in the last ten years, making it one of the youngest schools in the district. It is located in a new and growing community, and classrooms have been added to accommodate the increase in the student population.

The Thompson setting has the highest percentage of apartment dwellings and the highest percentage of single parent families of the four schools (see Table 5-1). This information may be related to the belief of school and district personnel that the community is more transient than most in Lyttefield and that many of the students come from homes which rely on income assistance from governmental sources.

The principal and head teacher at Thompson have both been with the school since it opened. In fact they were involved in the planning of the design and decor of the building and in the introduction of open area teaching, a concept which the principal admits may not have been new to the world of education at that time but which was to the district.

The Thompson staff has a reputation of being one of the most militant in the district, and many are active members of the teachers association. On the other hand, it also has a reputation of being highly professional. Several of the respondents mentioned that they chose to transfer to Thompson because of the challenge of working in a community school, especially when the home backgrounds of some of the students constitute what is generally thought of as a difficult teaching situation, and because of the professionalism of the staff.

Fraser Elementary

In contrast to Thompson, Fraser is an old school located in an established, stable, working-class community. The percentage of single parent families and the percentage of families living in apartments are lower in this setting than in the Thompson setting (see Table 5-1). Many of the students in the school today have followed their older brothers and sisters there, and in some cases even their parents.

Fraser enjoys considerable community support, and apparently has for a number of years. It has a reputation of being academically oriented and traditional; the latter description may be attributed, in part at least, to the fact that the previous principal and most of the staff had been there fifteen years or more. The new principal, who was assigned on the retirement of the former principal, is in his second year at Fraser. He is concerned that "traditional" is in danger of becoming "rigid" or "inflexible". His solution has been to bring in several new teachers, who now constitute about one-third of the staff. This was accomplished through retirements and voluntary transfers, and has not resulted in hard feelings or resentment.

Columbia Elementary

Columbia Elementary enjoys what is often thought to be the ideal educational setting. Its students come from upper-middle class, professional backgrounds. As Table 5-1 shows, nearly 80% of the families own their own home, and apartment dwellings are very rare. Of the four schools, the percentage of single parent families is lowest in the Columbia setting, only half of that in the Thompson setting.

In spite of its propitious setting, community relations at Columbia are considered to be only fair by district personnel, although there have been no confrontations or disputes between the school and the community to support such a view. It seems to be more a matter of the absence of good community relations rather than the presence of any definable problems. This neutral atmosphere seems to pervade all aspects of life at Columbia, as will be illustrated later. The principal and most of the staff have been there five years or more.

Lyttefield Secondary

Lyttefield Secondary is over twenty-five years old, and has experienced turmoil during much of that time. Any newcomer quickly learns that there have been two major fires at the school, destroying more than half the building on each occasion. Student unrest, discipline problems, vandalism -- the staff has had to cope with all these problems. The situation was at its worst during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and has improved considerably over the last two years. Nevertheless, as can be imagined, such activities have taken their toll on community relations. For example, during the course of the study two secondary schools were closed. Many parents objected not so much to the closing of these schools as to the transferring of their children to Lyttefield Secondary.

The previous principal had held that position for about fifteen years, and many of the staff have been there a similar length of time. He retired the year before the start of the study, and both the present principal and vice-principal are in their second year at Lyttefield. Many of the respondents referred to the considerable improvements the new administration had wrought, especially in the areas of controlling vandalism and keeping the school litter-free and clean.

Fraser Elementary is one of Lyttefield's feeder schools, and is located about 20 blocks away. It is not surprising, then, that they are demographically similar (see Table 5-1).

School Community Relations Programs

The descriptions provided by the respondents suggest that school community relations programs have four components: (a) the creation of an open, welcoming atmosphere; (b) written communications from the school to the home; (c) school-initiated community contacts; and (d) teacher-initiated community contacts. Each of these components is discussed in detail.

Open, Welcoming Atmosphere

Almost invariably the first comment the respondents would make in describing their school's contacts with the community was to the effect that "We have an open door policy. Parents know they are welcome here." When pressed to explain how parents know that there is an open door policy and that they are welcome, the respondents suggested a number of indicators, most of which were interpersonal in nature. These comprise the "non-physical" category in Table 5-2. Most of the physical indicators have been derived from the field notes, except the first and last, which were emphasized by the respondents, especially those concerned about community relations.

Table 5-2 also rates each school's performance on the indicators. The ratings are based on numerous observations made over a period of three months, and are intended to reflect usual conditions in the school rather than isolated circumstances. Nevertheless, the ratings are highly subjective, particularly in the case of the nonphysical indicators, and the school with the lowest ratings, Columbia, is the one in which access was most difficult and most constrained. These limitations must temper any interpretations or conclusions drawn from Table 5-2. On the other hand, the existence of a distinctive school atmosphere or climate and the ability of this atmosphere to convey a message to visitors does reflect the intuitive knowledge of many

Table 5-2

Indicators of "Open, Welcoming Atmosphere"

Indicators	Performance by School			
	Thompson	Fraser	Columbia	Lyttefield
physical				
attractive setting & decor; well-maintained	+	+	-	+
welcome sign	+	-	-	-
directions/map	+	-	-	+
display of student work	+	+	+	-
notices of upcoming events	+	-	-	+
evidence of school history	+	+	-	+
open classroom doors	+	+	-	-
nonphysical				
warm reception/greeting	+	+	?	+
helpfulness of secretary	+	+	?	+
introduction of visitors	+	+	?	-
vitality of staffroom	+	+	-	-
warm, courteous interactions	+	+	-	-

Note. + = indicator present or frequently observed
- = indicator absent or infrequently observed
? = insufficient observations to make assessment

people familiar with schools.

Physical indicators. The physical environment of the school contributes to the creation of an open, welcoming atmosphere in two ways. The first involves showing specific concern for visitors, by providing, for example, a welcome sign, directions to various areas in the school (especially the office), and a map of the building. These measures express the school's welcome to visitors and helps them find their way around. Only Thompson scores well on these indicators.

The physical environment also helps to create an open, welcoming atmosphere, in a more indirect manner, by showing that the school is, to quote one of the respondents, "a good place to be". The more attractive the school is, the more signs there are that it is a lively, active place of which students and staff are proud, the more likely it is that visitors will be comfortable there. All four schools are clean, litter-free, and well-maintained, but Thompson and Fraser appear to have made a greater effort to enhance their overall attractiveness, for example, through plants, colour, carpeting, and lighting, than have Columbia and Lyttefield. Classroom doors are left open more frequently at Thompson and Fraser than at Columbia and Lyttefield. Display of student works, mementos of past achievement, and notices of upcoming events are indices of staff and student involvement in the school that are common at Thompson and least common at Columbia.

Nonphysical indicators. The first three nonphysical indicators involve visitors directly, and are concerned with the manner in which they are treated. No ratings are given for Columbia on these indicators because only two visitors were observed, one of whom was a former teacher. At the other schools, visitors are received warmly, and the secretaries are courteous and helpful. Thompson is exceptional in both respects. For example, first-time visitors are treated to a guided tour of the building, to the accompaniment of information about the history of the school, current programs and practices, and special features of each teacher's class. Also, the secretary is very familiar with the operation of the school and can handle many of the telephone calls when the principal is not available. Perhaps the introduction of visitors to other staff members is the most significant indicators of how they are regarded, for it suggests the school personnel are interested in them. Conversely, when visitors are not introduced to the others, the message is that they are expected to complete their business and leave. Thompson and Fraser perform very well on this indicator.

The remaining two nonphysical indicators involve staff-to-staff and staff-to-student interactions, and contribute indirectly to the creation of an open, welcoming atmosphere. Vitality in the staffroom refers to the camaraderie among the staff, their cohesiveness, and the tone of their interactions. At Thompson and Fraser teachers are greeted as they enter the staffroom, bantering and teasing form a part of the exchanges, and teachers mix well, chat together on the way to class, and stop by each other's rooms. The negative ratings for Columbia and Lyttefield do not represent acrimony or lack of harmony; rather, the staff relations at these two schools can be described as generally neutral. Groups of teachers are friendly, but this does not characterize relations among the staff as a whole. The same pattern holds for the final indicator: at Thompson and Fraser staff-student interactions are warm and friendly, people greet one another with smiles, laughter is heard frequently; at Columbia the most common reason for the staff to talk to students in the hallway is to reprimand them; at Lyttefield, perhaps because of the larger numbers, people frequently pass in the halls without any kind of greeting, and it is not uncommon to hear a student talking rudely to a teacher or to see a group of students watching a teacher with an armful of books struggling to open a door without offering to help.

Summary. Thompson's performance is high on all the indicators, and it can be said to have succeeded in creating an open and welcoming atmosphere. In spite of the concern of a number of teachers at Fraser, or perhaps because of their efforts, Fraser's performance is also good, particularly on the important nonphysical indicators. The other two schools have not been as successful: Columbia has a very businesslike atmosphere, with everything under control but lacking in warmth and vitality; and Lyttefield performs well on the physical indicators, which attests to the efforts of the new administration to deal with a serious and longstanding vandalism problem, but not as well on the nonphysical.

Given the limitations of this set of data, one must be wary of the conclusions. On the other hand, the pattern of performance on this component is repeated on the other three components of the community relations program.

School Written Communications

Schools communicate with more people and communicate with them more frequently in writing than in person, making written communications an important component of the community relations program. There are three main types of written communications -- school bulletins, classroom bulletins, and newsletters -- although others are possible. Each type can be described along a number of dimensions: intent or purpose, which may be utilitarian, the conveying of specific information as efficiently as possible, or informational, the conveying of general and descriptive information; frequency, which is the number issued per year; tone, which may be either personal or impersonal, and is related to the degree of formality; context, which refers to the amount of background information provided and may be either full or limited; and parental involvement, which may be high or low, depending on the extent to which parents are made to feel part of happenings at the school.

Table 5-3 presents information about each school's written communications.

School bulletins. School bulletins are generally sent to the parents of all students and they are generally utilitarian in nature. Most bulletins deal with several different topics; they are, in a sense, a listing of events. An example of a multitopic bulletin is provided in Appendix D-1. Others, however, are concerned with only one issue, as in the example provided in Appendix D-2.

These examples also illustrate other features of school bulletins. For example, the tone is generally personal and informal, although this is often less true of Columbia than the other three. In multitopic bulletins the amount of background information provided is limited, but considerably more background information is provided in single topic bulletins. The extent of parent involvement also varies with the type of school bulleting: in multitopic bulletins the parents are merely expected to receive the information and follow the instructions as appropriate; this may also be true of single topic bulletins, for example, order forms for Hot Dog Day, but often they seek to include parents in the activities of the school, to make them feel part of what is going on.

Because Thompson sends newsletters home to the parents every second week, it issues few school bulletins and these are generally reminders of events described in the newsletters. Fraser does not

Table 5-3

School Written Communications

Types & Characteristics	Performance by School			
	Thompson	Fraser	Columbia	Lyttefield
school bulletins				
purpose	util.	util.	util.	util.
number per year	10-15	35-40	10-15	5-10
tone	personal	personal	personal	personal
context				
listing of events	-	limited	limited	limited
specific topic	full	full	full	full
parental involvement				
listing of events	-	low	low	low
specific topic	varies	varies	varies	varies
classroom bulletins				
purpose	util.	util.	util.	-
number per year	100+	100+	100+	?
tone	personal	personal	impersonal	-
context	full	full	limited	-
parental involvement	high	high	low	-
newsletters				
purpose	info.	-	-	info.
number of types	2	-	-	1
number per year	25	-	-	5
tone	personal	-	-	personal
context	full	-	-	full
parental involvement	high	-	-	high
other				
purpose	info.	-	-	-
number of topics	4	-	-	-
tone	personal	-	-	-
context	full	-	-	-
parental involvement	high	-	-	-

Note. info. = informational
util. = utilitarian

have newsletters, and the number of school bulletins is very high. Nearly half are essentially calendars of events, another quarter concern the parent advisory committee and opportunities for parents and teachers to meet, and the remaining focus on special events such as Sports Day, the Christmas Concert, and the like. Columbia and Lyttefield distribute relatively few school bulletins, and most are calendars of events.

Classroom bulletins. In addition to school bulletins, there are those bulletins sent home by individual classroom teachers. In each of the three elementary schools the combined total of classroom bulletins easily exceeds one hundred over the year. This is in clear contrast to the situation at the secondary school, where none of the respondents communicates to the parents by means of bulletins, nor is there any record of the other teachers doing so.

The function of classroom bulletins is generally utilitarian, with the vast majority asking parents to sign permission slips, provide food or money or some specified article, and volunteer to be a driver on a field trip. In spite of the similarity in purpose, classroom bulletins differ in tone, in the amount of background information provided, and in the extent to which parents are included or made to feel a part of the activity. Typically, the classroom bulletins written by teachers at Columbia are characterized by an impersonal and distant tone, by the provision of only essential information, and by assigning parents a subordinate or peripheral role (see Appendix D-3). In contrast, letters sent by Thompson and Fraser teachers have a warmer and more personal tone, give parents some information about the purpose of the field trip and how it fits into the program, and invite them to participate (see Appendix D-4).

Classroom bulletins are also used to keep parents informed about what their child is learning and in some cases to suggest activities they might do at home to supplement or reinforce classroom experiences. Nearly all the bulletins of this type at Columbia are prepared by the kindergarten teacher; teachers of all grades at Thompson and Fraser write such bulletins, some on a regular basis. More will be said about this in the section on teacher-initiated community contacts.

Newsletters. Newsletters differ from school bulletins in several respects. The presentation of this material is a concern, and newsletters frequently adopt a newspaper or booklet format and are decorated with examples of student art works. Newsletters share with school bulletins the function of warning parents of upcoming events. Unlike school bulletins, however, newsletters also report on school activities, describe school programs, and discuss topics of concern to parents, all at some length and in some detail. This last function is particularly important. For example, in his first newsletter of the year the principal at Thompson told the parents something about the philosophy of the school and the emphasis of its program, as the excerpt contained in Appendix D-5 illustrates. The Lyttefield principal introduced the new report card in an early newsletter, describing in detail the purpose of each category, the meaning of each symbol, and the way in which ratings are determined. He ended by inviting parents to discuss either the new reporting procedures or their child's progress with school personnel (see Appendix D-6). These two examples illustrate the warm and personal tone of newsletters, the full context provided for each topic, and the recognition given to the parents' role in their child's education and the value of their contributions.

Only Thompson and Lyttefield distribute newsletters. In fact, Thompson has two types, the biweekly newsletter which is sent to all parents and the bimonthly newsletter which is sent to all households in the community. Newsletters require considerable time and effort on the part of the principal, but certainly appear to be appreciated by all the parents I met.

Other types of written communications. Thompson has prepared other publications specifically for parents and other community members, including a statement of philosophy and objectives, a list of rules and regulations, a fourteen-page volunteer manual, and an annotated photograph album, with accompanying cassette tape, the purpose of which is to introduce people to the school. They are all reviewed and revised periodically.

Summary. The four schools differ considerably in the variety, frequency, and purpose of their written communications to the public. Thompson has the most types, issues the greatest number, is concerned with reaching the broader community as well as parents, balances the utilitarian and informative functions, and favours a personal tone, full context, and high parental involvement. Fraser and Lyttefield have fewer types of written communications and a lower frequency, but resemble Thompson in other respects, due mainly to the efforts of the new group of teachers at the former and the new administrators at the latter. Columbia's written communications are characterized by low variety, impersonal tone, limited context, and low parental involvement.

School-Initiated Community Contacts

The respondents identified five different types of school-initiated community contacts -- performances, fund-raising events, social events, informational events, and advisory events -- which they distinguished on the basis of purpose or intent (see Table 5-4). The volunteer program also brings the school and the community together, but few respondents included it as a community relations activity, although it is the only school-level activity other than the parent advisory council mentioned specifically in the

Table 5-4

School-Initiated Community Contacts

Characteristics	Performance by School			
	Thompson	Fraser	Columbia	Lyttefield
number per year of				
performance events	4	3	3	2
fund-raising events	2	1	0	1
social events	8	4	1	0
informational events				
individual	1	1	1	0
general	1	1	1	2
advisory meetings	24	4	6	2
volunteer program	+	+	-	-
parental involvement	high	increasing	low	low

district community relations policy.

Parent advisory councils. Because the Board thought it necessary to establish a separate policy dealing with parent advisory committees and because the respondents were divided as to their utility, this type of school-initiated community contact will be discussed first and by itself.

Thompson has a well-established and active community council. It meets once a month, as do each of the six committees. The principal chairs the Education Committee; community members chair the others. At one time the principal, head teacher, and, after Thompson was designated as a community school four years ago, the community coordinator played active leadership roles on the executive and on the committees, but they are all committeed to the notion that leadership should come from the community and they have worked closely with the community advisory council to help the members develop confidence in their own ability and learn to take the initiative.

The school administrators view the transformation of the council from its beginnings as a simple, informal discussion group who met frequently but irregularly with the principal to the active, independent group that it is becoming with satisfaction and excitement. They are quick to point out, however, that it has just been within the last two years that the council has taken the initiative, made decisions, and implemented plans on its own, and there is room to grow in that area.

Examples of activities undertaken by the council in response to the regularly conducted community needs assessments include the establishment of a before-and-after-school day care and the running of a summer program for the children, and it is responsible for the for the development and implementation of a program for gifted children. In addition, the council organizes all the school's social events and major fund-raising events, and are actively involved in major school productions. Of some concern to the school administrators, however, is the relative inactivity of the council in educational matters and the relatively little use made of the community in the school's programs. These are problems they intend to address next.

The teachers at Thompson support the community advisory council. A staff representative attends all meetings and reports to the others, although there are generally several teachers at council meetings and not the same ones each time. There is also a high staff turnout for all council social events, even though this is not required. Only one problem has arisen, over the use of funds. In the past teachers could always rely on council funds for special school activities, but now that the council has its own plans the staff can no longer count on this source of money. The school administrators explain that the staff had to readjust to this new school-council relationship, and they expect that such readjustments by both groups are inevitable and necessary if real development is occurring.

The other three schools are just beginning to establish parent advisory councils. At Lyttefield the parent group has only met twice, each time during the day, and has adopted the format of an informal discussion group. To date the attendance has been very small, fewer than ten, but it did suggest that an informational meeting on student drug and alcohol use be held one evening, and on this occasion several hundred people attended. Few of the respondents at Lyttefield had any idea of what the group was doing or what it was intended to do, and most expressed doubt about its potential utility. They referred to the parent advisory committee as "the principal's group", implying that he is the person primarily responsible for this kind of interaction with the community.

Fraser held its first parent advisory council meeting in the spring, and it was due entirely to the efforts of the group of recently transferred teachers. They waited until they had established themselves at Fraser, met many of the parents, developed a working relationship with the rest of the staff, and laid the groundwork before attempting to form the council. The letter inviting parents to participate in the advisory council was presented in the previous section. The teachers involved with the council are determined to include as many parents as possible, and after the first meeting sent the following message to all parents:

> The first meeting of the Fraser School Community Association was held at 82.03.03. The following is a

> list of topics and/or concerns to be explored by the association in the future. In an attempt to get more input by parents or guardians who are not able to attend our meetings, we are asking you to member the following one to five according to what you consider to be the most important topics ...

This was followed by the list of topics generated by the parents at the first meeting, plus two questions, one concerning the school's strengths and the other, its weaknesses.

The results were tabulated, and the priority ratings were used to develop a tentative agenda for future meetings. To date the council has established a regular schedule of meetings (once a month, in the evenings) and elected an executive which prepares the agenda and the minutes and whose president chairs the meetings, which are attended by 20 to 30 parents. The major concern of the parents in the early meetings has been to obtain information about the schools' programs and practices. The teachers involved with the council feel that this is an important first step, but that it will take time for the council to feel comfortable and confident working with teachers in this untraditional way and to take a more active role, one involving input. They also feel it will take time for the staff to adjust to this new school-community relationship.

The other staff members feel apprehensive and uncertain about the role of the parent advisory committee. They all express concerns about the possible interference of parents in classroom matters. On the other hand, they admit that the close relationship the recently transferred teachers have developed with parents has not led to interference, and so are willing to reserve judgment for the time being. The principal has supported the efforts of the group of teachers working to establish an active parent advisory council, but he is also concerned about not alienating the rest of the staff.

The Columbia parent group has an elected executive, and meets during the mornings about every five or six weeks. Between 20 and 30 parents attend regularly. At its initial meeting the committee listed eight goals which it hoped to pursue during the year:

1. Information
2. Input from parents
3. Planning projects involving parents and the school
4. Evaluation of programs
5. Problem solving
6. Communication between teachers and parents
7. Planning endeavours which help
    - parents feel "comfortable" participating in the school
    - teachers feel "comfortable" with parents
    - children become aware of common concerns
8. Volunteer program

At the last meeting of the year the President reported on the accomplishments of the committee:

1. Organized a potluck dinner
2. Established a Block Parents program
3. Explored the community school concept
4. Set up an emergency telephone network
5. Sought a more detailed school bulletin
6. Held an evening meeting for working parents
7. Became involved in Sports Day
8. Received information from the principal on school

activities such as the student council
9. Received information from the principal on school cut-backs
10. Received information from the principal on the report card system

A comparison of the goals and the accomplishments, reveals that only the first has been dealt with to any extent, and this only at the continual request of parents. In fact, they asked for other information, mainly concerning instructional programs and practices, which has not been forthcoming.

The committee organized the potluck dinner, which was very successful, and this may have addressed goal 7 to some extent, as may have parent participation on Sports Day. But in general goals related to parent involvement in decision-making and planning and to joint parent-teacher pursuits have been ignored to date. The explanation for this is two-fold. First, the staff views the parent advisory committee as essentially the responsibility of the principal. There is no commitment to ensuring its success. Second, the staff is concerned about the negative consequences of parent interference, and interprets requests for specific information about classroom programs and practices in this light (as do some of the teachers at Fraser). Certainly more active parent involvement would be viewed with alarm.

Other school-initiated contacts. Schools come into contact with the community in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. Table 5-4 lists the different types and their frequency at each school.

Performances are a means of demonstrating the school's achievements to the public, and thereby maintaining or increasing public support. At the elementary schools these frequently take the form of band and choir concerts, and a Christmas concert involving all the class. Both Thompson and Columbia stage plays as well. While performances at the secondary level are similar in many respects, they also more frequently include an open house, science fair, or other subject area demonstration.

Many elementary schools hold Hot Dog Days regularly as a means of raising funds, but Thompson also holds a community fair every fall, half the proceeds of which go to the community council and the other half of which go to the school. Lyttefield has become well-known over the last few years for its carnival/casino night extravaganza, which seems to have done as much for school morale as for its coffers.

Social events provide opportunities for teachers and parents to meet informally and to get to know one another better. They are intended to facilitate future home-school communication and to help parents feel more comfortable in the school. Fraser used a social event to introduce the idea of a parent advisory council to the parents. Social events typically take the form of an international night potluck dinner at the elementary level. Thompson has a more varied program, including dances, games night, and community day (with a parade). It also invites the community to help decorate the tree and sing carols at Christmas time. Lyttefield does not hold any social events, and this seems to be true of most secondary schools.

Informational events provide opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss educational matters. These may deal with individual concerns, as is the case with parent-teacher interviews, those occasions provided by the three elementary schools for the discussion of each child's progress and behaviour. They also may deal with more general concerns; for example: Thompson and Fraser held meet-the-teacher nights, during which teachers described their classroom programs and practices; Columbia introduced the new music program at the evening meeting of the parent advisory council; and Lyttefield organized a seminar for parents on teenage drug and alcohol use.

Only Thompson and Fraser have active volunteer programs, involving nearly seventy people in the first case and over thirty in the second. It must be remembered, however, that Thompson is a community school and so has a broader array of tasks that must be done by volunteers.

Summary. Again there are considerable differences among the four schools. The principal and staff at Thompson not only believe that parents and other community members should be involved in the school, but they also believe it is the school's responsibility to encourage community involvement and to provide frequent and varied opportunities for it. The degree of parent involvement is also higher at Thompson than in the other three schools. For example, many activities, including the play, the fair, and most social events, are joint community-school enterprises. Fraser seems to be moving in the same direction, largely due to the efforts of the group of recently transferred teachers. During the last year there has been an increase in the frequency and variety of school-initiated community contacts and in the degree of parental involvement. Although the frequency of school-initiated community contacts at Columbia is about the same as at Fraser, there is less concern at Columbia to increase the frequency and variety of contacts and less commitment to the notion of involvement. The new administrators at Lyttefield are concerned about parental involvement, but seem to be relying on written communications rather than on creating opportunities for parents to come into the school.

Teacher-Initiated Community Contacts

In addition to the school-community activities sponsored by the school, there are those carried out by individual teachers and largely limited to the parents of the students in their class. Teachers generally initiate contact with parents in order to give them information or to ask for their help (see Table 5-5).

Informational. Information-giving is most often on an individual basis, to discuss with parents some difficulty their child is

Table 5-5

Teacher-Initiated Community Contacts

Characteristics	Performance by School			
	Thompson	Fraser	Columbia	Lyttefield
variety				
informational				
individual	+	+	+	+
general	+	varies	-	-
volunteers				
drivers/supervisors	+	+	+	-
classroom aides	+	varies	-	-
guest teachers	+	varies	-	-
frequency	high	varies	low	low
parental involvement	high	varies	low	low

Note. + = characteristic of most teachers in the school
- = not characteristic of most teachers in the school
varies = characteristic of sizable minority of teachers in the school

experiencing. This discussion typically takes place over the telephone, although it may be followed by a meeting at the school. All the respondents reported engaging in this type of contact with parents.

Information-giving may also be of a more general nature, to keep parents informed of the teacher's programs and practices, and of happenings in the classroom. This is characteristic of teachers at Thompson and of the teachers who recently transferred to Fraser, but not of those at Columbia and Lyttefield, and is accomplished in many ways. For example, some teachers regularly invite parents into the classroom to watch the students demonstrate their new learnings or to examine displays of student work. The spirit is conveyed in a letter sent to parents by a Fraser teacher who was transferred there mid-year (see Appendix D-7). A few teachers compile a booklet of student work at the end of a unit (one to two pages per student), and send copies to parents. Others prepare monthly bulletins, an example of which is provided in Appendix D-8.

Volunteers. The use of parent volunteers is much more characteristic of elementary than of secondary schools, and the parents most commonly are asked to serve in the capacity of driver or supervisor on field trips. The teachers at the three elementary schools use volunteers in this way. Several teachers at Thompson and

Fraser try to involve all the parents (or more accurately, mothers), as an additional way of getting to know them and of conveying information about the classroom program to them.

Parents may also play a more active role, as classroom aides on an on-going basis or as guest teacher. This occurs frequently at Thompson and Fraser, especially in the case of the recently transferred teachers, but not at all at Columbia. The teachers who involve parents in this way claim that not only does it help them, but it also demonstrates to students that the teacher is not the sole source of information, that they can learn from other people in the community, and that parents and teachers do work together and are both concerned about their education.

Summary. Teacher-initiated contacts are relatively infrequent at Columbia and Lyttefield, and take the traditional form of discussion of a student's problem. At Thompson teachers meet with parents often and in a variety of ways. The situation at Fraser depends on the teacher, with the newly transferred teachers behaving similarly to those at Thompson and the others, like those at Columbia.

Chapter Summary

The four participating schools do have community relations programs, each consisting of four components:

1. the creation of an open, welcoming atmosphere -- There are both physical and nonphysical indicators of this atmosphere, and each category is composed of two sets of elements, some of which is concerned with visitors directly and conveys to them a message of how they are regarded, and the other of which is concerned with visitors indirectly and conveys to them a message of how staff and students feel about the school.

2. school written communications -- The three major types of written communications include school bulletins, classroom bulletins, and newsletters, each of which can be characterized by purpose or intent (utilitarian vs informational), frequency, tone (personal or impersonal), and parental involvement (high or low).

3. school-initiated community contacts -- The five types of school-initiated community contacts differ according to their purpose: performances offer an opportunity to demonstrate the schools' achievements and take the form of concerts, plays, science fairs, and open houses; major fund-raising activities include fairs, carnivals, and casino nights, and elementary schools also hold Hot Dog Days regularly; potluck lunches, international night dinners, and community day celebrations provide opportunities for parents and staff to interact on a social basis, and perhaps facilitate future communications; parents can obtain information about their child's

progress during parent-teacher interviews and about the schools' programs and practices on meet-the-teacher night or at meetings called specifically for that purpose; parent advisory councils are a forum for parent input; and volunteer programs are a means of involving parents directly in the school's activities.

4. teacher-initiated community contacts -- Teacher-initiated community contacts fall into two types, depending on their purpose: the first is to give information, which is most often on an individual basis, to discuss the problems of a particular child, but may also be of a more general nature, to keep parents informed of the teacher's programs and practices; the second is to ask for volunteers to serve as drivers and supervisors on field trips, as classroom aides, and as guest teachers.

The four participating schools carry on some activities in each of components 2 to 4. It is in some sense possible to define a "basic" school community relations program which consists of: the issuing of bulletins as necessary; the holding of a concert or open house, an international night potluck dinner (at least in elementary schools), and a meet-the-teacher night; and the contacting of parents when their child is experiencing academic or behavioural problems. In spite of this common basis, the schools' community relations programs vary considerably and consistently. Thompson has created an open, welcoming atmosphere and has a very active community relations program, both on a school-wide level and on a classroom level. Fraser appears to be moving in that direction, mainly at the instigation of a group of new staff members. Columbia and Lyttefield have taken a more traditional approach to community relations, although the new Lyttefield administration is addressing the issue and making improvements.

It is apparent that the four schools do differ in terms of the diversity and comprehensiveness of their community relations programs. There are also hints that they differ in other ways, including staff relations and teacher attitudes. In the next two chapters I will consider such school-based factors in an attempt to account for the differences in community relations programs, and then in Chapter VIII I will discuss the relationship between school community relations programs and district policy?

CHAPTER VI

STAFF NORMS:

SCHOOL-BASED INFLUENCES ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In the previous chapter I establish that the four participating schools differ considerably in their community relations activities, but did not explain why this is the case. If the policy itself were the sole, or even the major, influence on the schools' implementation efforts, then we would expect their community relations programs to be more similar than they are. This suggests that their differences are due primarily to school-based factors. In fact, I argue in this chapter that the differences in the community relations activities of the four schools can be accounted for, in large part at least, by the extent to which the staffs share the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. I describe various indicators of the two norms that emerged from the data, discuss the performance of the four schools on each, and relate differences in the extent to which the staffs share the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement to differences in the schools' community relations activities. I also discuss of the principal as an important school-based influence on policy implementation, both through his or her role in establishing and maintaining the staff norms of collegiality and continuous improvement and in more direct ways as well.

Staff Norms

The interview and observation data were analysed for references to the school's approach to planning and problem-solving, to relationships among the staff and between the principal and the staff, and the like. The purpose of the analysis was to identify school-based factors that appear to be related to the implementation of the community relations policy, that differentiate the four schools, and that are corroborated. It yielded thirteen such factors, nine of which concern the way the staff work together and so are grouped together as indicators of collegiality, and four of which concern efforts to assess and improve practice and so are grouped together as indicators of the norm of continuous improvement (see Table 6-1). The terms collegiality and continuous improvement, which were borrowed from Little (1982), refer to expectations and structures in the school for (a) shared work, and (b) analysis, evaluation, and experimentation.

This section describes each indicator, and evidence concerning it from each school, separately. This is done for the purpose of explanation, but it is an artificial fragmentation of the work climate of the school. The holistic nature of the school's expectations and structures for planning and problem-solving is underscored by the fact that the respondents did not distinguish between the way the staff approached the community relations policy and the way it approached other issues. They draw their examples from many aspects of school

Table 6-1

Indicators of the Staff Norms of Collegiality and Continuous Improvement

Norm	Indicator
Collegiality	Frequent and specific discussion of school issues Group planning School focus Willingness to share leadership tasks Willingness to learn from colleagues Mutual respect of staff members Sense of shared responsibility Sense of accountability to parents Pride in school's accomplishment
Continuous Improvement	Critical stance; non-complacent Consideration of alternatives/consensus building Willingness to try new ideas Long-range planning

life.

The Norm of Collegiality

Frequency and specificity of discussions. The first indicator of collegiality is frequent and specific discussion of school issues. This is characteristic of Thompson Elementary; is becoming characteristic of Fraser Elementary and Lyttefield Secondary; and is not characteristic of Columbia Elementary.

There were many indications at Thompson that staff discussion of school issues is common. For one thing, the respondents were able to describe the classroom practices of their colleagues. This is certainly due in part to the prevalence of team teaching and other joint class activities, and also to the frequent exchanges about students and about teaching strategies that occur in the staffroom. Several respondents mentioned that it is not unusual to telephone a colleague or to receive a call from a colleague during the evening to discuss an idea for classroom practice. Nor is discussion limited to individual concerns. The agenda of staff meetings includes such varied topics as school philosophy and implications for student-teacher relationships, whether or not to establish a program for the gifted, utilization of community resources in school programs, and special school-wide projects (e.g., safety week; computer week) in addition to the items typically discussed at staff meetings (e.g., how to organize parent-teacher night; whether or not to have a Christmas concert). Professional Day activities generally focus on issues of a school-wide concern. For example, the most recent activity consisted of groups of teachers visiting community schools in other districts and then reporting their findings to the whole staff.

Fraser respondents were certainly able to describe the position of the colleagues on a variety of school issues. This did not reflect their existence of established expectations and structures for discussion, but rather the efforts of the principal and a small group of teachers to routinize such behaviours. The respondents who had been at Fraser with the previous administration commented on the different approach to decision-making of the new principal, but were unwilling to state their preference. The respondents new to the school all believed that much more staff discussion was needed, on such issues as the purpose and organization of Sports Day, teaching practices, and parent involvement. They supported the principal's decision to use Professional Days to examine issues of school-wide concern instead of to write up report cards, and wanted to see staff meetings move in that direction as well. The parent advisory committee was of particular concern to these respondents, and they frequently introduced this topic into staffroom conversations, especially just before and just after a scheduled committee meeting.

The observation data of Columbia Elementary are admittedly limited. Nevertheless they failed to produce even one instance of staff discussion of school issues. Nor do the interview data suggest that such discussions are a frequent occurrence. For example, all but one of the respondents said at some point during the interview "I've never thought about that before" or "We [i.e., the staff] haven't discussed that." The only items on the agendas of staff meetings that were nonroutine were those that originated by the request of the parent advisory committee, namely, the community school issue and the provision of information about classroom programs to parents. On Professional Days teachers attended workshops of their choice or worked on classroom matters (e.g., report cards). Even the school's major production was organized by one teacher working alone.

Many of the Lyttefield respondents also said that either they had not thought about the question before or else that the staff had not discussed it. This is a situation the new principal and vice-principal are trying to change. They have established a number of committees, some ongoing and some ad hoc, to examine a particular issue and suggest solutions for consideration by the staff. Three of the respondents favoured this approach, but most of the others spoke slightingly of committee work and said the time was better spent on teaching or preparation. The new administration is also designating some Professional Days for discussion of school-wide concerns. This is in marked contrast to the practice of the previous principal, as the following anecdote illustrates. One of the respondents was a young teacher whose first position was at Lyttefield. She said that until the change in administration she had no idea of the intended purpose of Professional Days, and she soon learned not to ask other teachers what one was supposed to do on those days: "They just looked at me oddly and disappeared into their classrooms. I could tell that that was a question I wasn't supposed to ask."

Group planning and school focus. The two indicators of group planning and school focus are closely related, and so are discussed together. The discussion of the first indicator touched on these two characteristics. It is not surprising, then, that the pattern of differences between the four schools remains the same.

Group planning can refer to individuals on a staff working together or to the entire staff working together. Both types of group planning are evident at Thompson. The amount of team teaching and joint class activities that is characteristic of the Thompson program demands collaboration. Many of the special and extracurricular activities involve not just groups of teachers but parents and other community members as well. But the most striking examples of group planning are those that involve the entire staff and that focus on the school. The special project weeks are a good example. The theme is carried out through both classroom and school activities, and so demands the active participation of all teachers. Another example is the staff development of a school philosophy and a number of school policies (e.g., concerning student behaviour and the role of volunteers) that all staff members are expected to support. A third example of a somewhat different nature is the morning school opening exercises, where students and staff assemble to sing, hear announcements, and, according to the principal, "be reminded that they are part of the school family."

In the past, group planning and a school focus at Fraser has centered on such matters as Sports Day and the Christmas concert. It has not involved curricular, instructional, or student management issues to any extent. The situation may change, however, and certainly the principal and the recently transferred teachers are working toward that end.

The situation at Columbia is similar to that at Fraser, except there is no impetus to change. Curricular, instructional, and student management issues are the domain of the individual teacher.

Group planning and a school focus have also been rare at Lyttefield, although the new administrators are trying to change this pattern. They would like to see the staff deal with problems -- the problems identified to date concern student behaviour (e.g., absenteeism) rather than programs and instruction -- and are relying on the use of committees to bring about this change.

Shared leadership and staff relations. The next three indicators concern various aspects of staff relations: willingness to share leadership tasks; willingness to learn from one's colleagues; and respect for the professional competence of one's colleagues. All three are closely related.

At Thompson all staff members assume a leadership role at some time. For example, the teachers take turns leading the daily opening exercises; on Professional Days, groups of teachers examine different aspects of the selected issue and report to the rest of the staff; different people undertake the organization of school activities. This sharing of leadership tasks is not the usurpation of the principal's leadership; it does mean that the staff is actively participating in school decision-making and problem-solving. In order for staff members to carry out such leadership tasks successfully, their colleagues must respect their professional competence and be willing to learn from them. The Thompson respondents frequently mentioned the contributions of other staff members to the school and their accomplishments in the classroom.

The teachers who have transferred recently to Fraser have assumed nearly total responsibility for organizing the parent advisory committee. They introduced the idea to the staff at meetings and in conversation and to the parents at a pot luck luncheon held for that purpose. They planned and conducted a parent opinion survey, and reported the findings to the staff and to the parents. And finally, they are helping the elected executive and other committee members plan and run the meetings. These teachers are acting as leaders in another way as well, by explaining to the other staff members what it is they mean by collegiality and why they think it is necessary, and by modelling the collegial behaviours they are advocating. The established Fraser teachers recognize the contributions of their new colleagues, acknowledge their successes both with the students and with the parents, but are concerned about the potential negative consequences of this collegial approach (e.g., possible interference from parents; less time for teaching and lesson planning).

One teacher who undertook the organization of the school play and another who demonstrated the new music program to the parent advisory committee were the only examples of shared leadership at Columbia contained in the data. Interestingly, none of the respondents mentioned these examples; the information was obtained from parent bulletins. This suggests that such activities are not highly valued by the staff. In contrast to the respondents at the other three schools, the Columbia respondents did not refer to the classroom practices or special contributions of their colleagues.

The recently established committee system provides Lyttefield teachers with an opportunity for shared leadership. There are two problems, however, that might limit its usefulness in this respect: a number of staff members are not convinced of the need for committees; and there is growing concern that the same few people will do the majority of the work. While several respondents credited one teacher in particular with the success of the Carnival, a few made disparaging comments about some of their colleagues, the only respondents to do so. While this may represent the views of only a small number of teachers, nevertheless it does suggest a potential obstacle to the development of collegial working relationships at Lyttefield.

Shared responsibility and accountability. These two indicators are very similar, the first reflecting a sense of responsibility toward one's colleagues and the second, a sense of responsibility toward parents or the public in general.

There is considerable evidence of both indicators at Thompson. In fact, participation in group discussions of school issues and in group planning are indicative of a sense of responsibility to one's colleagues, a willingness to contribute and to do one's share. The following anecdote reveals this sense of responsibility in another way. One of the teachers had just been transferred from a secondary school and had no experience at the elementary level. Two other intermediate teachers, who were team teaching, were helping him in a variety of ways. For example, one would take the two classes to free the other to observe the transferred teacher or to demonstrate a lesson for him. They offered him feedback on his teaching and helped him plan his program. This was the most striking example of shared responsibility in the findings. The efforts to involve parents in decision-making and in school activities, to explain school programs and practices, and to keep them fully informed are all evidence of a sense of accountability to parents.

The efforts of the recently transferred teachers at Fraser to establish a parent advisory council and to increase both the frequency and the variety of community relations activities attest to their sense of responsibility to parents; their efforts to establish more collegial working relationships attest to their sense of responsibility to their colleagues. All these respondents believed that parents have a right to information about school programs and practices and to be involved in decision-making. They also expressed the sentiment that teachers are responsible for what happens in the school, not just what happens in the classroom. The other respondents had a narrower sense of responsibility, one limited essentially to the classroom.

Both the principal and the respondents at Columbia advocated a position similar to that of the established teachers at Fraser. They believed that responsibility to parents is fulfilled by keeping them informed of their child's progress, and to teachers, by controlling one's class so as not to interfere with their teaching.

This, too, was the view of most of the Lyttefield respondents. Three of the respondents and the administrators, however, had a broader vision of responsibility. Again the committee system was seen as a means of achieving this goal. For example, teachers, students, and parents sat on the committee studying the problem of absenteeism. In this way parents had input in school policy and teachers shared in the work of the school. One interesting finding peculiar to the Lyttefield respondents was that they discussed with students the kind of issues respondents at the other schools discussed with parents. For example, those of the Lyttefield respondents who believed in public input felt that this should include students; and all respondents said they discussed behavioural and academic problems directly with the student, unless they were severe. They explained this is done because the students are young adults who are assuming responsibility for their own lives. This, in fact, may be a significant difference between elementary and secondary schools, and have implications for their respective community relations programs.

School pride. The last indicator of the norm of collegiality is the most inferential of the group, yet it does seem to be associated with the way a staff works together. It is also related to the creation of a warm, welcoming atmosphere described in Chapter V.

Both Thompson and Fraser respondents expressed pride in their school's accomplishments. At Thompson this included the quality of teaching, the diversity of programs, the success of the choirs, and the growth of the community relations program; at Fraser, the academic success of the students, certain extracurricular events that have become traditional, and the extent of community support. The Columbia respondents gave no evidence of pride in the school. They did not mention any special features of the school nor particular contributions of any individuals. The observation data did not provide any evidence either — no trophies, no plaques, no pictures, no announcements of upcoming events. All the Lyttefield respondents mentioned the difficulties the school had experienced in the past, but commented that the new administration was succeeding in bringing about changes. Every respondent cited the clean and litter-free condition of the school as a concrete example of the improvement.

The Norm of Continuous Improvement

Critical, non-complacent stance. A critical, non-complacent stance, which is an indicator of the norm of continuous improvement, counterbalances the pride in the school's accomplishments which is an indicator of the norm of collegiality.

This stance is revealed in several ways at Thompson. The school philosophy is really a set of guiding principles. School policies and school practices are examined for consistency within this philosophy. For example, one aspect of the philosophy concerns respect for each individual in the school community. Consistent with this is the inclusion in the Volunteer Manual of a section on the rights of volunteers, and the orientation of the discipline policy toward helping students distinguish appropriate behaviour from inappropriate rather than toward punishment. The philosophy itself is assessed and revised periodically. One piece of information collected during visits to other community schools was a copy of their philosophy. These were posted in the staffroom prior to a staff meeting intended to review the school philosophy in light of these others.

The recently transferred teachers at Fraser are attempting to lead the staff to an assessment of practice in order to examine both their intent and the extent to which the intent is being achieved. For example, considerable discussion has centered on what is meant by an open door policy and what practices are consistent with this policy.

Again neither the interview nor the observation data provided evidence that Columbia is characterized by a critical stance. Review of school policy or practices was not included on any staff meeting agendas. Even the parents' request for more information about classroom programs was resisted.

The Lyttefield administrators have identified some pressing school problems -- student absenteeism, poor morale among both students and staff, poor public image -- that they are attempting to solve with the participation of teachers, students, and parents.

Consideration of alternatives and willingness to try new ideas. These two indicators are closely related, for consideration of alternatives is an empty exercise if it is not accompanied by a willingness to try new ideas. The success of these efforts depends on the achievement of consensus. Thus consensus building is included in this section, although it can be thought of as an indicator of the norm of collegiality.

The development of the gifted program at Thompson provides evidence about these indicators. The parent advisory council raised the issue of whether or not there was a need for such a program. The staff decided there was a need, and two different approaches were suggested -- an individualized program that would be incorporated into the ongoing classroom program, or a group program that would involve the removal of students from the classroom. Staff members had strong feelings on this issue, and arguments were presented and considered over a period of time, but when a decision was made it was supported by all. The respondents stressed that while one of the selection criteria for teachers is a school focus, this does not imply uniformity of thought. On the contrary, the staff values independent thought, for without it the school climate would stagnate.

There is much evidence of consideration of alternatives at Fraser, but while some are willing to try new ideas, others appear reluctant to change their established patterns. The situation at Lyttefield seems to be similar to this. Thus at both these schools there are signs of lack of consensus, of different views that have not been reconciled. This is probably to be expected, since long-standing and well-established practices are being challenged and since there are no structures and processes in place for discussing and resolving differences of opinion. There are no signs of lack of consensus at Columbia, but this appears to be due to the absence of discussion about potentially controversial issues.

Long-range planning. The final indicator of the norm of continuous improvement is long-range planning.

The description of the development of the community advisory council at Thompson is evidence of the type of long-range planning that occurs at this school. The principal, head teacher, and community coordinator in particular had a vision of what ideally the council could accomplish and have worked toward that end in stages, without losing sight of it. Similarly, another goal is utilization of the community in school programs. In the past this has involved the use of volunteers and guest teachers. Now a social studies program involving the community is being planned. The community coordinator has worked with the primary teachers to develop and try out some activities, and next year will do the same with the intermediate teachers. The staff expects to gradually expand the units until a suitable program has been designed.

The recently transferred teachers at Fraser have adopted the same approach to the development of the parent advisory council. They expect that as its confidence and experience increases, so will its independence and initiative, and thus the council-staff relationship will change correspondingly. Similarly, they see both the amount of staff collaboration and the range of issues discussed gradually increasing. This seems to be the hope of the Lyttefield administrators as well, a hope that was shared by a few of the respondents. Planning at Columbia focuses on the immediate, the upcoming Sports Day or concert. Continuity from year to year rather than the gradual development of programs or implementation of change seems to be what is valued.

Summary

Table 6-2 presents an assessment of the extent to which the staffs at the four schools share the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. The Thompson staff is very collegial and concerned about the improvement of practice. The group of recently transferred teachers at Fraser are committed to these norms, and may be having an influence on the rest of the staff. The new administrators at Lyttefield are trying to develop these norms, mainly through the use of staff committees to work out solutions to school problems, but staff support for these efforts is growing very slowly. Few of the practices listed in Table 6-1 as indicators of the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement are evident at Columbia, nor is there sign of any movement to institute them.

Support from Other Research

The generalizability of findings is one problem that faces case studies. The existence and importance of the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement identified in this study find support in other studies of various aspects of school life, including: school staff development programs (Little, 1982); school effectiveness

Table 6-2

Extent of Shared Norms by School

School	School	
	Collegiality	Continuous Improvement
Thompson	high	high
Fraser	increasing	increasing
Columbia	low	low
Lyttefield	increasing	increasing

(Mackenzie, 1983); staff, student, and parent satisfaction with the school (Goodlad, 1983); school implementation of innovations (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1979); and school implementation of federal policy (Hargrove et al., 1981). Although the terms norm of collegiality and norm of continuous improvement may not have been used, in each of these studies the more and less successful schools are distinguished in terms of practices similar to those described in this study.

For example, from her study of school staff development programs Little (1982) concluded that the most successful schools were those in which the teachers "work together": they discuss their teaching practices frequently, on a variety of occasions, and in concrete and precise terms; they continuously try to improve their practice, using the tools of analysis, planning, evaluation, and experimentation; and they view these developmental activities as "relevant to, an integral part of, the occupation and career of teaching" (Little, 1982, p. 3).

Based on his review of the literature, Mackenzie (1983, p. 8) listed the elements of effective schooling that have been well supported by research findings. All the elements that do not directly involve the instructional process appear to be related to staff norms. For example, the following are indicative of the norm of collegiality: shared consensus on values and goals; total staff involvement with school improvement; positive accountability -- acceptance of responsibility for learning outcomes; stability and continuity of key staff; positive climate and overall atmosphere; teacher-directed classroom management and decision-making; and school-wide emphasis on basic and higher order skills. Other elements are indicative of the norm of continuous improvement: goal-focused activities toward clear, attainable and relevant objectives; long-range planning and coordination; autonomy and flexibility to implement adaptive practices; in-service staff training for effective teaching; and high and positive achievement expectations with a constant press for excellence.

The "satisfying" schools in Goodlad's (1983) study were characterized by collegiality and self-renewal. The former involved good staff relations, mutual respect for the professional competence of colleagues, staff participation in decision-making, and a focus on instructional as opposed to routine and management issues; the latter, the continuous evaluation of programs, examination of alternate procedures, and a willingness to try new ideas. The teachers in these schools perceived them "to be solving their problems, to provide appropriate conditions for them to do their job, and to have staffs capable of doing what needed to be done" (Goodlad, 1983, p. 55).

According to McLaughlin and Marsh (1979), successful implementation of innovations occurred in schools in which there are good working relationships among the teachers, in which the teachers are involved in decision-making in both the planning and the implementing stages, and in which forums are provided for sharing problems, formulating solutions, and discussing implications for practice. In addition, efforts to implement the innovation were "an integral part of an ongoing problem-solving and improvement process within the school" (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1979, p. 90). It can be inferred that the staffs of these schools share the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. Similarly, Hargrove et al. (1981) found that the schools that had been most successful in implementing a federal policy concerning handicapped children where characterized by "a considerable collaboration among teachers" and "a high degree of common commitment to a mission" (p. 115).

The Principal

As the above examples have shown, the principal exerts considerable influence on the extent to which the staff shares the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. The principals at Thompson, Fraser, and Lyttefield clearly expected the teachers to work together on some problems of school-wide concern. They created opportunities for this to happen by establishing committees, setting aside time at staff meetings, and designating Professional Days for this purpose. They gave legitimacy to such staff efforts by working with the groups themselves and by acting on their recommendations.

The importance of the commitment of the principal to the activities of a staff committee is illustrated by an occurrence at Fraser. The principal believes that the most important aspect of the community relations is the individual parent-teacher relationship, and that the purpose of the other community relations activities is to promote it. This is quite different from the vision of the group of teachers working to establish the parent advisory council. At a chance encounter with several of these teachers a year after the study was completed, they said the council was not progressing as they had hoped and they felt this to be due to the lack of active support from the principal.

The degree to which the principals promoted the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement appeared to be related to their sense of purpose for the school. The Thompson principal sees the school as a family or community in which the members work hard, seek excellence, and find satisfaction in such endeavours. In order for this to happen the staff must work together and focus on improvement. The Thompson respondents spoke about the time the principal spends in classrooms, the encouragement and help he gives them when they are trying something new, and his reaction if the idea did not work. Apparently he never talks about failure -- he helps the teacher look for ways to make the idea work, and if they cannot find any, then they conclude they have learned something about when an idea will or will not work. The principals of Fraser and Lyttefield believe that a cohesive staff with pride in the school is important to success, and the respondents were all aware their efforts to develop this cohesiveness and pride. The Columbia principal, on the other hand, believes that the first duty of the school is to keep the children safe, and "if they also pick up some learning on the way, so much the better." This probably accounts for his emphasis on scheduling and on order, on knowing where everyone is at all times. He also believes that instructional and curricular decisions should be made by the teacher, and his job is to arrange things "so that they can get on with their job of teaching."

Support from Other Research

Again the findings of this study are supported by the results of other research. The principal appears as an important factor in many studies of effective schools. The importance of this finding is underscored by the fact that "although none of the studies set out to study the role of principals, most concluded that principals were clearly important in determining the effectiveness of schools" (Shoemaker & Fraser, 1981, p. 178).

For example, Mackenzie's (1983) review of the school effectiveness literature identified the principal as a key actor, one who serves as an example to the staff by his or her strong instructional emphasis, who offers continual assistance, who inspires others to effective group efforts, and who provides a consistent and continuous leadership by setting a tone of purpose and order for the school as a whole, building commitment for specific academic goals, and guiding the evaluation of progress toward these goals. Similar characteristics differentiate effective principals from ineffective ones (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982).

Goodlad's (1983) study of schooling found that the principals of satisfying schools were perceived by their staff to be competent, independent professionals who possessed professional autonomy and use it, who support their teachers, and who treat them as professionals. These principals felt themselves to be in control of their jobs and of their use of time, and to have influence over decisions concerning the school. This description of the principal is similar to the "authoritative democrat" style found by Hargrove et al. (1981) to be related to success in implementing a federal policy. Authoritative democrats use both persuasion and manipulation to guide the staff in a predetermined direction, but also listen and respect others' views.

Successful implementation of innovations has been attributed largely to the efforts of the principal. For example, Hall et al. (1980) concluded that "the single most important hypothesis emanating from these data is that *the degree of implementation of the innovation is different in different schools because of the actions and concerns of principals*" (p. 26, their emphasis). Similarly, McLaughlin and Marsh (1979) state that "success in local projects were part of a dynamic, problem-solving organizational framework headed by a committed administrator" (p. 93).

Taken together, these studies suggest that the principal must be a strong and active leader in any school improvement efforts, one who inspires the teachers to work together to solve the school's problems.

Staff Norms and Policy Implementation

The four schools differed in the extent to which they shared the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, and these differences were related to differences in their community relations programs. The Thompson staff highly valued the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, and it had developed the most diverse and comprehensive community relations program of the four. The Columbia staff did not value these norms, and not only was their community relations program the least diverse and comprehensive but there was no perceived need to change. There were movements to increase the staff's concern about collegiality and continuous improvement and to expand the community relations program at both Fraser and Lyttefield Secondary, led primarily by a group of recently transferred teachers, with the support of the principal, in the former case, and primarily by the new administrators, with the support of some teachers, in the latter case.

The Thompson staff frequently discussed their community relations program: its purpose -- what it was they were trying to do and why; its success -- how well they were accomplishing their objectives and what they could do to improve; and its consistency with the school philosophy and other school practices. Thus discussion of the details of a specific community relations activity took place within a broader context. The principal demonstrated to the staff through his actions that community involvement is one of his priorities. Teachers accepted that community relations is their responsibility as well as the principal's, and established classroom practices and individual relationships with parents that were consistent with the school's practices.

The diversity and comprehensiveness of the Thompson community relations program, then, was the result of staff collaboration on setting and working toward goals. In doing so, the staff developed an understanding of, or conceptual clarity about, the meaning of their community relations policy, and modified both school and classroom practices accordingly. The policy itself was defined within the context of that particular school and community. Thus implementation of the school community relations policy at Thompson was characterized by clarification and mutual adaptation, both of which have been identified by previous research as fundamental attributes of meaningful implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, 1975, 1978; Emrick et al., 1981; Moore et al., 1977).

In contrast, the Columbia staff discussions of community relations activities were much less frequent and centered on the details of organization rather than the purpose, assessment, and improvement of the overall program. Consequently the staff as a whole did not develop an understanding of the school's community relations policy, but instead teachers developed individual interpretations of it that remained unchallenged by comparisons to others. This individualistic and fragmented approach was reinforced by the fact that the principal and staff viewed the parent-teacher relationship as the most important aspect of community relations, thus making community relations a classroom rather than a school concern.

That the staff did not perceive a need to change can be accounted for by its lack of collegiality -- because they did not discuss the issue of community relations, the teachers could not develop a shared understanding of its purpose and meaning; because they did not establish common goals, the teachers had no means of assessing school and classroom practices; because they did not examine what it was they were doing and why, the teachers saw no reason to change.

Fraser and Lyttefield appeared similar to Columbia in many respects, except that the administrators and a small group of teachers at both schools felt the need for improvement in several areas, including community relations. They believed this was possible only if the staff adopted a school focus and worked together to seek solutions to common problems. This, then, is the link between staff norms and policy implementation: clarification and mutual adaptation, which are essential to meaningful implementation, are far more likely to occur if a staff is collegial and concerned about improvement. Conversely, by working together to improve school practice the staff is likely to encourage and reinforce the development of the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement.

Chapter Summary

The four schools differed in the extent to which they shared the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. The staff at Thompson was very collegial and concerned about continuous improvement. The group of recently transferred teachers at Fraser were committed to these norms, and they were attempting to influence the rest of the staff to accept them as well. The new administrators at Lyttefield Secondary were trying to develop these norms, mainly through the use of staff committees to work out solutions to school problems, but staff support for these efforts was growing very slowly. Few of the practices found to be related to the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement were evident at Columbia, nor was there evidence of any movement to institute them.

Collegial staffs discussed school programs and practices frequently and specifically and so they were able to describe their colleagues' beliefs and practices on a variety of issues. They engaged in group planning, which focused on the improvement of the school as a whole, and different individuals assumed leadership for specific tasks from time to time. This was possible because the teachers felt responsible both to their colleagues and to the public and because they respected the professional competence of their colleagues and believed they could learn from them. In addition, collegial staffs were proud of the accomplishments of the school, but not complacent about them. In fact, they were concerned about the continuous improvement of programs and practices, which they examined regularly. They also engaged in long-range planning that involved the consideration of alternatives suggested by staff members.

Not only did the schools differ in the extent to which they shared the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, but the pattern of differences was the same as, and can be argued to be related to, the pattern of differences in the community relations programs. It seems likely that concern for collegiality and continuous improvement encourages the processes of clarification and mutual adaptation, both of which are important aspects of implementation.

Why is it that these norms are more typical of some staffs than others? In this chapter I presented evidence that the principal is certainly one factor. In the next chapter I argue that teacher ethos is another.

CHAPTER VII

TEACHER ETHOS:
SCHOOL-ORIENTED AND CLASSROOM-ORIENTED TEACHERS

Lortie (1975) defines teacher ethos as "the pattern of orientations and sentiments which is peculiar to teachers and which distinguishes them from members of other occupations" (p. viii). Studies of teacher ethos characterize the work orientation as individualistic, conservative, and focused on the present; emphasize the uncertainties inherent in the work situation that underlie the sentiments; and identify the saliency of psychic rewards derived from relationships with students in the classroom (see, for example, Lortie, 1975 and Lieberman & Miller, 1979).

Other research, however, suggests that successful and satisfying schools are those in which there are staff norms of collegiality and continuous improvement (see, for example, Goodlad, 1983; Little, 1982; and Mackenzie, 1983). It is difficult to reconcile these norms with the descriptions of teacher ethos offered by the literature. Instead, an ethos that values and receives satisfaction from cooperative problem-solving, that focuses on adapting to changing circumstances and is oriented to the future, and that is supported by confidence in the possibility of improvement seems more consistent, and even necessary. Possibly the unitary teacher ethos identified to date is giving way to another one. Lortie (1975) foresees this possibility,

and the findings of this study support it.

The analysis of the teacher interview data revealed two distinct patterns of responses, one of which suggested a school orientation and the other of which suggested a classroom orientation. This chapter describes the two patterns of beliefs and attitudes expressed by the respondents, compares each to the description of teacher ethos in the literature, and considers the relationship between teacher ethos and policy implementation.

School-oriented and Classroom-oriented Teachers

Table 7-1 summarizes the responses of the two groups of respondents to the interview questions. Not only did the two groups answer each question differently, but they maintained this difference from question to question.

School CR Activities

The two groups of respondents differed in their judgments of the most important school community relations activity and in their preferences for the scope of these activities. School-oriented teachers made clear distinctions between various kinds of school community relations activities, depending on purpose. They identified the parent advisory council as the most important general activity, because it provides a forum for parents to learn about the school's programs and practices and to participate in making these decisions.

Table 7-1

Beliefs and Attitudes of School-oriented and Classroom-oriented Teachers

Question	Orientation	
	School	Classroom
school CR activities		
most important	parent-advisory council	parent-teacher interview
preferred scope	frequent & varied	limited
teacher CR activities		
most important	parent involvement	discussion of problems
preferred scope	frequent & regular	infrequent & irregular
purpose of CR program	increase parental involvement	increase parental support
appropriate parent role	cooperative	supportive
attitude to parental input	beneficial	problematic
good parent-teacher relationship	partners	subordinate-superordinate
attitude to ESSA policy	positive; focus on benefits	neutral/negative; focus on obstacles
expectations of principal	educational leader	manager
expectations of colleagues	professional characteristics	personal characteristics
attitude to school policy	necessary, unifying	unnecessary, inflexible
knowledge of district policy	some; many sources	little or none; few sources

Table 7-1 (Continued)

Question	Orientation	
	School	Classroom
source of challenge	adapting to new setting	adapting to new class

Note. CR = community relations; ESSA = elementary school self-assessment

When the progress of an individual child is the concern, then they viewed the parent-teacher interview as the most important activity. They considered other school activities, such as performances and social events, important because they help make parents feel more comfortable about coming to the school and interacting with the staff. To summarize, school-oriented teachers favoured increasing both the number and the variety of school community relations activities in order to enable parents to participate in whatever way they wish.

Classroom-oriented teachers, on the other hand, did not distinguish kinds of school community relations activities. They considered the parent-teacher interview to be the most important of these activities, because it provides them with useful information about individual children, information that helps them understand the children better and so be able to help them more. They expressed concern about increasing the variety and the frequency of school community relations activities, particularly with respect to the parent advisory council, because this increases the chances of interference in the professional domain.

Teacher CR Activities

Again the two groups of respondents differed in their judgments of the most important teacher community relations activity and in their preferences for the scope of these activities. Classroom-oriented teachers described their contact with parents as infrequent and irregular, occurring when a child is having academic or behavioural problems or, in the case of elementary teachers, when help is needed for a field trip. In contrast, school-oriented teachers seemed to be trying to establish a more varied, frequent, and regular contact with parents. This included, in addition to what classroom-oriented teachers do, the use of newsletters, monthly telephone calls regardless of whether or not there were problems, classroom performances and displays of work, classroom aides, and parents as guest teachers.

The respondents expressed similar attitudes to teacher community relations activities as to school community relations activities. Classroom-oriented teachers appeared to wish to restrict contact with parents to those occasions on which they could be of service to the teacher. They felt that this is all the contact most parents want. School-oriented teachers, on the other hand, appeared to wish to expand contact with parents so as to be mutually beneficial. Their rationale was that these activities establish good communication lines so that parents will feel at ease in calling as soon as a problem arises, that it is the parents' right to be involved, and that it shows students that the home and the school are working together.

Purpose of CR Program

Classroom-oriented teachers emphasized one or more of the following as the purpose of community relations activities: to promote the positive attitude of parents to the school, so that they, in turn, will engender positive attitudes to school and to learning in their children; to provide teachers with information about students; to improve the school's public image; to demonstrate the school's achievements; to help parents provide suitable materials or activities at home (i.e., reinforce what is being learned at school); and to communicate teacher expectations to parents. The secondary teachers tended to focus on the public relations aspect of community relations, that is, on the school's public image; elementary teachers, on the implications for the classroom situation. Both, however, appear to be concerned with increasing parental support for the school and the teacher.

In contrast, school-oriented teachers stressed one or more of the following as the purpose of community relations activities: to make parents feel welcome; to facilitate future communication between the home and the school; to keep parents informed about school programs and practices; to provide opportunities for parental input; to discover parents' expectations of the school; to encourage the use of school facilities; and to establish the school as a community center. This group of respondents appears to be concerned with increasing parent involvement in the school.

Appropriate Parent Role

Classroom-oriented teachers ascribed a supportive role to parents, one consistent with their view that the purpose of community relations is to increase parental support. When asked to identify what they consider to be appropriate ways for parents to be involved in school activities, classroom-oriented teachers suggested that they meet with the teacher when a problem arises, help out at special events, be a driver or supervisor on field trips, develop a positive attitude to school and to learning in their children, provide suitable activities and materials at home, and assist the teacher in the classroom. School-oriented teachers, on the other hand, ascribed a cooperative role to parents, one consistent with their view that the purpose of community relations is to increase parental involvement. They felt that not only is it to appropriate for parents to share their knowledge and skills in the classroom with the children, to keep fully informed about school programs and practices, and to participate in decision-making, but also that they should be encouraged to do so. Many felt that schools are not doing enough in this area.

Attitude to Parental Input

Classroom-oriented teachers considered the issue of parental input or involvement in decision-making as a problematic one. Over and over again they expressed concern that this will lead to interference, especially in instructional matters. School-oriented teachers, on the other hand, viewed parental input as beneficial, resulting in better understanding of the issue and of the other's perspective. They supported the right of parents to be fully informed about school programs and practices and to participate in these decisions.

This question seemed to pose the most difficulty for both groups of respondents. The problem was where to draw the line. Classroom-oriented teachers felt that parents had the right to information concerning their child and concerning general school policy (e.g., the discipline policy). They were unsure of how much information concerning programs and instructional practices parents are entitled to, and of whether or not they should have any input. School-oriented teachers felt that teachers should be able to explain and justify all school and classroom practices, even instructional ones, to parents. They believed that parents should be involved in decisions concerning general school policy. They were unsure, however, of how much input parents should have in program decisions, and seemed to set the boundaries at instructional decisions.

Parent-Teacher Relationship

Inferences about the nature of the parent-teacher relationship can be made from the respondents' judgments of important school and teacher community relations activities, their beliefs concerning the purpose of these activities, their descriptions of appropriate parent involvement, and their attitudes to parental input. School-oriented teachers seemed to view parents as partners, and many used this term to describe the parent-teacher relationship. They expressed the belief that the more parents and teachers work together, the more effective schooling will be. They felt responsible for parents and recognized their right to be involved in what happens to their child. Classroom- oriented teachers seem to view the parent-teacher relationship as one of subordinate to superordinate. They felt that parents should support them and do as they ask. For example, many classroom-oriented teachers commented that the parents they really need to see do not attend parent-teacher interview nights or else that parents do not follow through at home on their promises (e.g., to supervise homework). In general, the classroom-oriented teachers seemed to be more concerned about being in control of interactions with parents than did the school-oriented teachers.

Attitude to the ESSA Policy

Although few of the respondents in the elementary schools had seen the elementary school self-assessment policy when they were interviewed, most had formed some impression of it. School-oriented teachers reacted favourably to it, and focused on its potential benefits. They saw the policy as a means of coordinating programs from grade to grade, of developing consistent, school-wide practices, and most important, of assessing what it is they, as a staff, are trying to do and how well they are doing it. Classroom-oriented teachers reacted neutrally or negatively, and focused on the obstacles. They questioned the need for the policy, were concerned that sufficient release time and other resources would not be made available, and predicted that the policy would prove dysfunctional by reducing or negatively affecting preparation and teaching time.

Expectations of the Principal

Classroom-oriented teachers focused on the managerial aspects of the principal's role. Essentially they expected the principal to ensure that teachers are able to do their job with as little interference as possible. Many used the phrase "let teachers do their job". This meant that the principal was responsible for keeping things running smoothly, for obtaining necessary materials and resources, for making sure that teachers keep their classes under control so as not to disturb others (this was a particular concern of secondary teachers), and for buffering teachers from the community.

In contrast, school-oriented teachers focused on the educational aspects of the principal's role. They felt that the principal is responsible for identifying problems, bringing them to the staff's attention, and leading the staff in resolving them. They also expected the principal to be familiar with school programs, to know what is happening in each classroom, to help teachers implement new programs, to encourage teachers to innovate, and to support teacher initiatives.

Expectations of Colleagues

The respondents' expectations of their colleagues was consistent with their expectations of the principal. Classroom-oriented teachers tended to focus on the personal characteristics of their colleagues. They expected other staff members to be pleasant, to do their share of the work (work in this context referred to such things as supervision in the hallways and extracurricular activities), and to share materials, ideas, etc. Classroom-oriented teachers seemed to feel that neither the principal nor their colleagues could offer them much help in classroom matters, except perhaps indirectly, by not hindering their efforts.

School-oriented teachers, on the other hand, focused on the professional competence of their colleagues. They frequently mentioned the classroom programs of other staff members, pointed out their contributions to the school, and expressed pride in them. School-oriented teachers valued collegial activities such as team teaching, exchanging classes for certain activities, combining classes for other activities, joint planning, and seeking the advice of others. Unlike classroom-oriented teachers, school-oriented teachers seemed to feel that the principal and their colleagues could help them improve their classroom performance.

Attitude to School Policy

Classroom-oriented teachers felt that school policies are unnecessary and often dysfunctional because of their inflexibility. They equated school policies with rules, which they felt were seldom applicable in more than a few cases and thus caused more problems than they solved. They emphasized the individuality of each classroom and the inability of policy to take that into consideration. Classroom-oriented teachers, especially those at the secondary level, expressed resentment about the amount of time spent on committee work and the futility of this exercise.

In contrast, school-oriented teachers favoured the establishment of school policies. Their rationale was that, first of all, it means that the staff has discussed the issue, an activity which they felt is beneficial in its own right. Many expressed the concern that all too often staffs do not deal with important issues, that they spend time on trivial matters rather than on those which are difficult to resolve. School-oriented teachers also viewed policy as a means of giving the staff a focus and of ensuring they are all working in the same direction. They believed that this enhances rather than hinders classroom activities.

Knowledge of District Policy

Few of the respondents had read either of the district policies under study or, for that matter, any other district policy.

Classroom-oriented teachers had only a limited and rather vague knowledge of the policies and cited the principal as their major source of information about district policy. School-oriented teachers had a somewhat better knowledge of the policies and cited a variety of sources of information, including Board members, Central Office staff, the Teachers Association, district committees, and district publications.

Source of Challenge

As part of the background information about the respondents rather than because of any expected relationship to policy implementation, the interview guide contained a question about the number of schools taught in and the length of time at each. Surprisingly, this question distinguished between the two groups of respondents. Classroom-oriented teachers tended to remain at the same school for ten or more years. They felt no need to change schools because to them the source of challenge in teaching comes from adapting to each new class. School-oriented teachers tended to transfer every five to seven years because to them the source of challenge in teaching comes from adapting to a new school and community.

Comment

Both groups of respondents felt that the student-teacher relationship in the context of the classroom is the essence of schooling. They differed, however, in their conceptualization of the relationship between the classroom and the school, between the teacher and other actors in the school setting. The classroom-oriented teachers believed that the school may support or interfere with activities in the classroom, but that success depends primarily on their efforts alone. School-oriented teachers, on the other hand, believed that the school had considerable impact on life in the classroom, and that their efforts can be enhanced by working with parents, colleagues, and the principal.

Of course, the small and nonrandom sample raises the issue of the generalizability of this finding. This question can only be answered by further research, but there are several indications that such a study would be worth doing. For example, the two groups of respondents clearly answered the interview questions differently, and most individuals were assigned easily to one of the groups. Although classroom-oriented teachers certainly formed the majority, school-oriented teachers constituted a significant minority, about thirty percent of the sample. Furthermore, the distinction was meaningful to the respondents. In fact, many of the respondents made the distinction themselves, without using the labels, and indicated to which group they belonged. Finally, descriptions of the staffs of effective schools suggest that there exists a teacher ethos similar to that of the school-oriented teachers.

Implications

This section first compares the two orientations to previous research on teacher ethos, then examines the relationship between teacher orientation and policy implementation.

Comparison to Previous Research

The comments of the respondents and inferences drawn from their comments suggest that the ethos of the classroom-oriented teacher closely resembles that described by previous research while the ethos of the school-oriented teacher does not.

Lortie (1975) and Lieberman and Miller (1979) argue that the components of the teacher ethos are interrelated and reinforce one another. For example, because teachers are uncertain about the links between the teaching-learning process, and about their success in achieving their goals, they wish to continue to do what is familiar and has worked, at least to some extent, in the past. Consequently they resist challenges to the status quo and attempt to maximize the rewards that are immediate and more certain, namely, the psychic rewards derived from their relationships with students. This leads to a focus on the classroom and on the present, and limits time spent with colleagues. This, in turn, increases reliance on an individualistic approach to teaching that does little to reduce uncertainties about the complex task of teaching.

The findings of this study concerning the classroom-oriented teachers support these arguments. The classroom-oriented teachers seemed to be conservative and individualistic, to focus on the present, to be troubled by uncertainties, and to derive satisfaction from the psychic rewards offered by the classroom. They seemed unsure of what is expected of them, and many commented on the ever increasing and sometimes conflicting demands society makes of them. Their solution appeared to be to retreat to the classroom. They resisted district and school policies, and argued against them on the basis of obstacles to the change process (e.g., lack of time and resources) rather than on the basis of characteristics of the change itself. They wishes to be allowed to get on with their job of teaching, and resented intrusions into their domain.

School-oriented teachers, on the other hand, dealt with the uncertainties inherent in the teaching situation by sharing the responsibility with others and by working with others to identify and seek solutions to problems. They believed improvement is possible, and were willing to try new ideas that might lead to improvement. In sum, they appeared to be adaptive and collegial, to focus on the future as well as the parent, to have a strong sense of efficacy, and to value and receive satisfaction from cooperative problem-solving in addition to the psychic rewards of the classroom. The ethos of the school oriented teacher is very different from that generally described in the literature.

The data do not allow any conclusions concerning teacher orientation and quality of teaching, and there may be none. It does seem possible, however, that classroom-oriented teachers experience more anxiety and stress about their job than do school-oriented teachers, and high levels of stress appear to have a detrimental effect on teaching (Barineau, 1981; Peters, 1981). Furthermore, the improvement of teaching practice demands "an empirically grounded, semantically potent common language" (Lortie, 1975, p. 212) and a willingness "to take their teaching out of the closet of the classroom, admit to the need to improve, and to make it, along with the rest of the daily program, the focus of school-wide, on-site staff development" (Goodlad, 1983, p. 58). This would seem an easier task for school-oriented teachers than for classroom-oriented ones.

Relationship to Policy Implementation

Obviously, teacher orientation is related to policy implementation in a direct way. Because of their conservative attitude and concern for the present, classroom-oriented teachers are likely to resist district, and even school, policy, especially if it deflects time and effort away from the classroom or if it might jeopardize the established student-teacher relationship. School-oriented teachers are more likely to be receptive to school and district policy (although many of the respondents qualified this by saying that they had to be able to believe in the policy, that is, they had to be convinced it would lead to improvement) and to work with others to plan and implement the change process.

Teacher orientation appears to affect policy implementation in another way, however. Table 7-2 shows the percentage of respondents at each school who are school-oriented and classroom-oriented. There is reason to believe these figures reflect the distribution on the staff as a whole. For example, at Thompson classroom teachers are selected for, among other things, their willingness to work cooperatively and to take a school perspective. Thus it would not be surprising if a large percentage of the staff had a school orientation. The only respondent designated as a classroom-oriented teacher was a specialist who worked in two other schools as well as Thompson Elementary. The three school-oriented respondents at Lyttefield appreciated the efforts the new administrators were making to promote staff collegiality and decision-making, but felt that most of the staff were resistant to these efforts, while the other respondents made disparaging comments about "committee work". It is likely, then, that the majority of the staff is classroom-oriented. Certainly the principal at Columbia did little to encourage a school focus and none of the respondents spoke of any conflict on the staff over this issue, so again the probability is that most of the teachers are classroom-oriented. This situation at Fraser is most clear-cut.

Table 7-2

Orientation of Respondents by School

School	Percentage of Respondents	
	School-oriented	Classroom-oriented
Thompson Elementary	83	17
Fraser Elementary	50	50
Columbia Elementary	20	80
Lyttefield Secondary	25	75

Everyone on the staff could identify those who believed in dealing with issues on a school-wide basis (about one-third of the staff) and those who did not, because this very issue was an ongoing topic of discussion.

It can be inferred from these data that there is a relationship between the orientation of the teachers on a staff and the extent to which that staff shares the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, which, in turn, is an important factor in policy implementation. If there are many school-oriented teachers on a staff, then the staff is likely to share the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. Such a staff will likely make a sincere effort to implement district policy. A staff consisting of many classroom-oriented teachers is unlikely to share the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. Policy implementation then becomes a matter of individual rather than group effort, thus reducing the probability of success.

This, of course, does not imply that a change in teacher orientation must occur before policy implementation can begin. Working successfully with colleagues on a problem of mutual and immediate concern (e.g., implementation of a policy) might promote such a change. In fact, this seems to have been the case for many of the school-oriented respondents. They claimed to have held the conventional attitudes and beliefs at one time, but then learned that, to use their words, "there was a better way of doing things", generally through a principal with whom they had worked.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I argue that in addition to the teacher ethos typically described in the literature, which I have referred to as classroom-oriented, a second ethos, a school orientation, exists. According to the classroom-oriented teacher, the school is little more than an aggregation of classrooms. The school may support or interfere with activities in the classroom to a limited extent, but has little real impact on them. Parents, colleagues, and the principal may help by expressing support for the teacher's efforts and doing as he or she asks, or they may interfere by making demands. Nevertheless, what happens in the classroom is determined primarily by the efforts of the teacher. Thus the teacher focuses his or her time and attention on classroom matters and resents expending them on what are considered to be nonclassroom matters.

In contrast, the school-oriented teacher seems to believe that what happens in the classroom does not occur in isolation from the school as a whole. The school is an entity that has considerable impact on life in the classroom. Parents, colleagues, and the principal are partners working together towards the same goals, and they can enhance the teacher's efforts in the classroom. By cooperating with these others on matters of general concern, the teacher can improve classroom conditions more effectively than by working alone.

I also argued that teacher orientation is related to policy implementation, both directly, through the individual's receptivity to change and to external influence, and indirectly, through the extent to which the staff shares the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement.

In Chapters VI and VII I have examined school-based factors which appear to influence policy implementation. In the next chapter I consider district-based factors, in particular, central office-school linkages.

CHAPTER VIII

CENTRAL OFFICE-SCHOOL LINKAGES: DISTRICT-BASED INFLUENCES ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In the two previous chapters I concentrated on school-based factors that influence policy implementation. In this chapter I examine the relationship between the district policy, the community relations programs of the four schools, and the implementation strategies utilized by the senior administrators, using the five research questions posed earlier (p. 8) as a framework for analysis. I focus particularly on how and to what extent the School Board and central office are able to influence implementation activities at the school level. Much of the discussion revolves around the leadership role of the district administrators and the appropriate division of responsibility between the central office and the school.

RQ1. Invariant Features of the Policies

The first research question concerns the primary attributes of the policies. This refers to the invariant features of the policies, such as their complexity, specificity, and scope, that constrain the implementation process.

Both policies under study are broad in scope. The community relations policy requires the school to examine every facet of its contact with the community, and to do what it can to promote two-way communication with the public, including establishing a parent advisory council. The elementary school self-assessment policy requires the school to examine its programs and practices, and to formulate a plan for improvement based on this assessment. Moreover, both policies are complex. They involve such fundamental aspects of school life as who participates in decision-making, what issues are brought forward for discussion, and the extent of teacher classroom autonomy.

About thirty percent of the respondents supported the intent of the policies. They felt that encouraging community involvement, staff collegiality, and school self-assessment are appropriate, and necessary, measures for improving the quality of education offered by the schools. In other words, these respondents believed that the goals and assumptions of the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies were compatible with their own. In fact, the existence of authoritative policies on these matters both legitimated and facilitated whatever efforts the respondents had been expending on their own initiative toward these goals. Furthermore, in addition to believing that these policies addressed real problems and offered practical solutions, these respondents derived feelings of challenge and satisfaction from interactions with parents and with colleagues, the kinds of activities advocated by the policies.

The other respondents, however, did not share these attitudes, and in fact had strong reservations about both policies. They did not feel there was a need for either policy and suspected the policy initiators of being politically rather than educationally motivated. (that is, of engaging in "vote-getting" behaviours and of trying to "score points with the electorate".) They were particularly concerned with the possibility of parental interference in professional domains. They resented being compelled to engage in activities that they did not consider to be part of their professional responsibilities, and they were worried that the time and effort demanded by policy implementation would diminish the quality of their instructional endeavours. To summarize the position of the majority of the respondents on the two policies under study, then, they saw no need for them, judged the goals and assumptions of the policies to be incompatible with their own, and derived no sense of challenge or satisfaction from the kinds of activities advocated by them.

Research suggests that teachers are more likely to implement a policy that they consider to: (a) address a real problem or need (McLaughlin & Berman, 1975); (b) offer a solution that is an improvement to the status quo (Common, 1980; Dalin, 1975; Doyle & Ponder, 1977-78); (c) have direct implications for the classroom (Dalin, 1975; Doyle & Ponder, 1977-78; McLaughlin & Berman, 1975); and (d) offer enjoyment, challenge, satisfaction, or some other intrinsic reward (Common, 1980; Doyle & Ponder, 1977-78; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1979). It is apparent, then, that the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies are intrinsically motivating to only a minority of the respondents.

Research also suggests that the closer the beliefs and attitudes inherent in the policy are to existing norms (Common, 1980; Dalin, 1975; Werner, 1980) and the lower the degree of risk involved (Boyd, 1978), the more likely it is that they will be accepted and internalized by the implementers, and the more successful implementation will be. Teachers generally have been found to be resistant to efforts to increase public participation in educational decision-making (Boyd, 1978; Kirst & Walker, 1971) and to promote a school focus as opposed to a classroom focus (Goodlad, 1983; Lieberman & Miller, 1979; Lortie, 1975), and this proved to be true of the majority of respondents in this study.

In spite of their broad scope and complexity, the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies are relatively unspecific. They do not specify the changes that must be made or how they should be made. It is one thing for the Board to mandate a parent advisory council; it is another for the staff to know how it should operate, in what way and to what extent parents should be involved in school practices. It is one thing for the Board to require schools to assess their programs and practices; it is another for the staff to know how to adopt a school focus in order to work together to solve common problems.

Research suggests that implementation is more likely to be successful if the required knowledge and skills are stated explicitly and if the teachers either possess them or are willing to learn them (Common, 1980; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Kritek, 1976; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1980). Not only are the required changes in the role behaviours and role relationships not explicated in the two policies under study, but the majority of respondents were resistant to any changes in these areas.

To summarize, both the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies can be described as broad in scope, complex, and nonspecific. The policies are not intrinsically motivating to the majority of the respondents; their inherent beliefs and values are not compatible with those of the majority of the respondents; and the changes they demand in role behaviours and role relationships are resisted by the majority of the respondents. This suggests that the implementation strategies employed by the senior administrators must convince the teachers that there is a need for the policy, demonstrate the ability of the policy to solve the problem, develop in the teachers an acceptance of and internalization of the values and goals of the policy, and help the teachers change their role behaviours and role relationships in ways consistent with the policy. In sum, they must encourage and support clarification and mutual adaptation.

There is no reason to expect that this can be accomplished easily. For one thing, both policies imply that current school practices are inadequate, an implication not likely to be well-received by people who consider themselves to be professionals (Mann, 1978a&b). For another thing, teachers are not going to abandon easily practices that have served them well in the past for other practices whose outcomes are unknown (Lieberman & Miller, 1979; Lortie, 1975), nor can they change some aspects of their behaviour without creating repercussions for other aspects (Johnson, 1983; Lieberman, 1982).

The the invariant features of the two policies, and their potential impact on implementers, have considerable implications for the type of implementation strategies utilized by the senior administrators. This issue is the focus of the second research question.

RQ2. Implementation Decisions
and
RQ5. External and Episodic Events

The second research question concerns the decisions made by the School Board and senior administrators that bear directly on the implementation process. This refers in particular to the implementation strategies employed, but also to the conceptualizations of the nature of policy, policy implementation, implementer role, and policy maker-policy implementer relationship that influence these decisions. Because external changes that occur during the course of implementation might have an effect on the decision of the senior administrators, the fifth research question is discussed in conjunction with the second. It refers to factors that originate outside the district or that are episodic in nature and that might influence the implementation process.

School Board members had little involvement with the elementary school self-assessment policy under the committee submitted it to them for approval. As implementation of the policy has been postponed indefinitely, it is impossible to know what their role would have been in that process. There is little evidence, however, that they fully and actively supported the policy. For example, at a public Board meeting several of them cited Circular 92 as another instance of Ministry infringement of local autonomy and of costly demands being made on the district without the provision of necessary resources. They repeated these sentiments during the interviews, although most felt that the idea of school self-assessment is a good one. A few, however, said that there was no need for the policy because they had hired well-qualified and competent professionals who could be trusted to do their job.

On the other hand, the Board members were totally responsible for the community relations policy. Yet even in this case they played a limited role in implementation. They spent several months on developing the policy but no time at all on considering how it should be implemented. That they felt to be the job of the Superintendent and his staff. It soon became apparent, however, that the Board had expectations concerning school-level implementation activities and that their expectations were not being fulfilled. The Board hoped that the schools would promote two-way communication with the public by establishing parent advisory councils. They passed several resolutions to this effect, instructing the Superintendent to convey their wishes to the school each time. When this proved ineffective, they finally developed a policy mandating the committees.

These actions suggest that the Board members believe that policy development and policy implementation are separate and sequential activities, and that the policy itself is the determinant factor in implementation. The senior administrators seem to share this belief. For example, they gave the elementary school self-assessment committee over two years to develop the policy, and during this time they instructed the schools to delay any self-assessment activities until the district policy and materials had been prepared. The committee itself was very certain that its mandate was to develop the policy and that this did not include planning for its implementation.

The major strategies utilized by the Board to influence school implementation activities, then, are the issuance of authoritative statements (i.e., policies and resolutions) and reliance on the Superintendent and his staff to ensure compliance with them. This the senior administrators do primarily by disseminating and explaining the appropriate information. They describe their implementation strategies as being based on two major premises: (a) the need to be flexible, in order to allow schools to adapt the policy to their specific circumstances; and (b) the need to "sell" the schools on the policy, to convince them of its merits. This suggests that they are aware of the implications of the invariant characteristics of the two policies for the choice of implementation strategies. In fact, the policy statements themselves do permit individual adaptation by the schools. Other actions of the senior administrators, however, are not entirely consistent with their intentions.

For example, consider the manner in which the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies were introduced to the schools. In the case of the latter policy, the Assistant Superintendent (Elementary) informed the principals at a Principals' Meeting that copies of the draft of the policy were available on the table by the door. He asked them to pick one up on their way out and examine it with their staff. He emphasized that the senior administrators and the committee were interested in their feedback, but that they had to have it quickly because the policy was scheduled to go before the Board for approval in the near future. Out of approximately two and a half hours of time available at the meeting, three minutes were taken to introduce a policy that many were predicting would not be well-received by school personnel. The community relations and parent advisory council policies were introduced in the same manner.

The introduction of the policy is usually followed some time later with a workshop. This is an implementation strategy favoured by the senior administrators and clearly supported by the Board. For example, until they decided to postpone implementation of the elementary school self-assessment policy, the senior administrators had planned to hold a two-day workshop with school administrators before classes began in order to explain the policy and the assessment instruments. Similarly, since the adoption of the community relations policy, workshops on communicating with the public and on establishing parent advisory councils have been held. In addition, two Principals' Meetings were devoted to the issue of community relations and the Superintendent talked about the issue in his address to the annual meeting of the Teachers' Association.

All these implementation strategies deal with the school personnel *en masse*. The senior administrators were not involved with school level implementation activities directly, although the school administrator respondents felt that their requests for help or additional resources were met quickly. In other words, it appears that the senior administrators are responsive to the needs of the schools but do not actively lead school level implementation activities. They did not even develop any mechanisms to monitor implementation of the community relations policy, nor were any planned in the case of the elementary school self-assessment policy.

Board members, however, did attempt to monitor the progress of the implementation of the community relations policy. This was prompted by a personal interest in the policy and by feedback from constituents. For example, on three different occasions the Board became concerned about the status of parent advisory committees and so asked the Superintendent to report on the matter. He, in turn, asked a member of his staff to prepare a survey instrument of three or four broad questions to distribute to the principals. Thus the assessment of the success of the implementation of the policy was based on the self-reports of the implementers.

To summarize, the implementation strategies utilized by the Board and the senior administrators appear to be based on the assumptions that: (a) policy development and policy implementation are separate and sequential activities; (b) the policy statement is the determinant factor in implementation; and (c) once school personnel acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, they can successfully implement the policy. In addition, the Board members seem to assume that the district is hierarchically organized, with instructions going from them through the senior administrators to the school personnel, who then comply with the instructions. The importance of clarification and mutual adaptation is acknowledged, but little is done to encourage and support these processes.

Moreover, the attitude of the senior administrators to the policies might either reinforce or negate the other implementation strategies. This, in fact, appears to be a crucial element in the implementation of district policy:

> Regardless of the source of change, the single most important factor is *how central office administrators take to the change* ... If they take it seriously, the change stands a chance of being implemented. If they do not, it has little chance of going beyond the odd classroom or school. (Fullan, 1982, p. 165; emphasis in the original)

> The attitudes of district administrators about a planned change effort were a "signal" to teachers as to how seriously they should take a special project. The field work offers numerous examples of teachers -- many of whom supported the project goals -- who decided not to put in the necessary effort simply because they did not feel that district administrators were interested. (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1979, p. 72)

What do we, and the school personnel, know about the attitude of the senior administrators to the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies?

The attitude at the district level to the elementary school self-assessment policy can be inferred from public comments about it. The statements of the Board members at a Board meeting were mentioned previously. Comments such as: "The Ministry only requires us to have a policy in place, not to actually be doing it (i.e. self-assessment)"; "Elementary school self-assessment is important, but not as important as some other things."; and "We would not have this policy if it were not required by the Ministry." are typical of those made by various senior administrators on different occasions, including Board meetings and elementary school self-assessment committee meetings. They suggest that the policy is not a priority of the senior administrators and that they do not support it to any significant degree.

The frequency with which meetings of the elementary school self-assessment committee were cancelled or postponed because of other events is another indication of its importance to senior administrators. No meetings were held during the two months of the CUPE strike; none were held in the spring, when the central office representatives on the committee were involved in staffing; and none were held during the summer holidays or early in the school year when classes were beginning. Meetings were postponed so that central office representatives to the committee could attend emergency meetings held because of the newly announced government restraint program. Finally, implementation of the policy was postponed indefinitely due to the restraint program. Clearly other things are more important than elementary school self-assessment.

District administrators were not as outspoken in the case of the community relations policy, probably because it originated with the Board. They did describe themselves as "men in the middle" who must explain to the principals what the Board wants and to the Board why the schools find it difficult to do what it asks. They seemed to resolve this dilemma by emphasizing certain aspects of the policy that are in line with what the schools are already doing. For example, two Principals' Meetings were devoted to the issue of community relations. They resulted in the conclusion that public relations, i.e., making known what the school does well, is a priority, and that the best PR is a satisfied child. This had the effect of equating community relations with public relations, and public relations with the individual parent-teacher relationship. Then the schools could, and did, argue that they were already meeting the requirements of the community relations policy and so did not have to make any changes.

Few of the teacher respondents had ever read, or were even aware of the original community relations policy. They did know, however, that the district was concerned about community support, and that they learned from their principal and from the Superintendent's address to the annual general meeting of the Teachers' Association. Once again community relations were equated with public relations and the public involvement component was forgotten. Of course this interpretation was in keeping with implementation of the policy at the district level (see Chapter IV), and this may have been, in part at least, a response to external events: concern about public support for schools in a time of declining enrollment, inflation, higher taxes, and increasing unemployment may have resulted in a shift of emphasis from community relations to public relations (thereby appealing to those who do not have children in the schools but who represent an increasing percentage of the taxpayers), and an increase in emphasis on the school's community relations program (thereby appealing to those who do have children in the schools).

It has already been demonstrated that the senior administrators did not spend a lot of time on planning for implementation. Yet based on their analysis of the Rand findings, McLaughlin and Marsh (1979) concluded that this is important and that school personnel should be involved:

> Only the fourth (and more time-consuming) planning strategy, collaborative planning, generated the broad-based institutional support necessary to effective implementation and to continuation of successful practices. Projects adopting this planning style actively engaged both teaching and administrative staff from the preproposal period through implementation, thereby gaining consensus and support from teachers, principals, and central office personnel. (p. 74)

The two main points made here by McLaughlin and Marsh were: (a) that the participation of the principals and teachers was based on the notions of partnership and not parity; and (b) that the developmental and implementation activities were interconnected, with plans being continuously adjusted according to the specific circumstances of each school. Contrast this with the situation at Lyttefield, where principals and teachers sit on district committees as representatives of their respective employee groups, in order to protect their interests, and where policy implementation is clearly distinct from, and follows, policy development.

McLaughlin and Marsh (1979) also concluded that implementation strategies involving training in specific skills had little effect in the short run, and none at all in the long run. On the other hand, staff support implementation activities such as the provision of assistance to the schools, project meetings for individual school staffs, and staff participation in decision-making at the school level "not only reinforce(d) the contributions of staff training, but they also (made) important contributions to promoting teacher change and to supporting staff assimilation of project practices" (p. 77). The effectiveness of these school-based implementation activities seemed to be due to their ability to help staff solve problems as they arose, to encourage teachers to learn from one another, and to promote teacher understanding of the project goals and their implications for practice. Fullan (1982) was referring to these kinds of activities when he said that successful implementation requires central office administrators to "set up a process to deliver specific implementation support" (p. 163; emphasis in the original).

The Lyttefield senior administrators relied almost exclusively on staff training activities. Moreover, these were offered to only one or two teachers from each school, on the assumption that they would transmit the information to their colleagues, an assumption challenged by the findings reported in Chapter VI. They assisted the schools on request, but did not provide school support activities of the kind described above. Thus the implementation strategies utilized by the senior administrators, and the assumptions on which they were based, do not compare favourably with those suggested by the analysis of the invariant features of the two policies nor with those suggested by the Rand findings. It would not be surprising, then, if they had little effect "beyond the odd classroom or school." This question is explored next.

RQ3. Variable Features of the Policy

The third research question concerns the endogenous attributes of the two policies. This refers to their variable features that become known during the implementation process, and includes the policy maker-policy implementer relationship, the values and interests of the various actors, implementer cooperation, implementer role, and the implementation process.

The community relations policy of the four schools consisted of the same components, but they differed considerably in terms of diversity and comprehensiveness (see Chapter V). A possible explanation of this phenomenon is that district implementation strategies encouraged adaptation by the schools. This, however, does not seem likely. The senior administrators acknowledged verbally the necessity of a flexible approach, but they utilized implementation strategies that treated the schools identically, and from a distance. A more defensible explanation is that implementation was school-based and school-specific, that is, dependent largely on the extent to which the staff shared the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, and the principal supported the development and maintenance of these norms (see Chapter VI), and whether the teachers are school-oriented or classroom-oriented (see Chapter VII).

The initial reaction of the school staffs to the policy seemed to determine their future course of action. Acceptance of the policy was related to compliance with it, and nonacceptance to noncompliance, symbolic compliance, or cooptation. For example, community relations was a major concern of the Thompson principal and teachers even before the policy was adopted. Consequently they viewed the policy in a positive light; in fact, the principal saw it as a means of facilitating their efforts, by making funds and other resources more readily available. Because there were established structures and expectations concerning the way the staff worked together to solve common problems, including the improvement of school practices, and the principal actively supported these norms, their efforts to develop a good community relations program was successful. The newly transferred teachers at Fraser also considered community relations to be a priority, and they used the existence of district policy on this matter to legitimate their attempts to bring about changes in the school. Although the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement were not well-established at Fraser, the efforts to improve community relations practices provided a vehicle for the development of these norms.

Generally speaking, the Columbia and Lyttefield teachers viewed the policy negatively, based on their judgments that the goals and values it espoused were incompatible with their own. The new Lyttefield administrators were concerned about community relations in the schools as a whole, but most of the teachers, the majority of whom were classroom oriented, felt that this was a matter for the administrators. Columbia essentially coopted the policy, by reinterpreting it to conform with school practices so that no changes were necessary. Both Columbia and Lyttefield had refused to comply with the parent advisory council policy for several years, and their current compliance was more symbolic than real, addressing the letter rather than the spirit of the policy.

This brief summary of the implementation of the community relations policy at the four schools illustrates that implementer cooperation is not automatic and that effective implementation is characterized by clarification and mutual adaptation at the school level. In addition, there was no support for the view of policy as a set of instructions or a guide for future actions. Policy did facilitate school practices and efforts to improve, and it did legitimate the attempts of some members of a school staff to make changes in school practices. There was also some evidence that policy might exert influence in a third way, by creating a climate of opinion. The respondents felt that there was more discussion of public relations, parent advisory councils, and elementary school self-assessment among principals and teachers since adoption of the policies.

The finding that policy implementation is largely dependent on school-based factors is supported by other implementation research. According to Mann (1978c):

> Change is whatever the service deliverers - schools and teachers - decide it is to be. The less self-determination is allowed to these ultimate implementers of change, the less total change will result. (p. 285)

Studies of other aspects of school life have also identified the school as the unit of change. Based on the results of a six-year study of schooling, Goodlad (1983) argued that in any developmental or renewal activity the school as an entity, rather than individual components such as the principal, the teachers, or the curriculum, should be the unit of analysis, planning, and implementation. Case studies of effective schools (Little, 1982; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980; Rutter et al., 1979) in particular have shown that the school can make a difference, that the collaborative efforts of the staff can create a positive learning environment, despite the background of the students and the availability of resources. More rigorous quantitative studies (Brookover et al., 1979; Madaus et al., 1979) have reached similar conclusions.

One shared characteristic of the successful schools in the studies just cited was their adaptiveness. Goodlad (1983) found that a distinguishing feature of the schools that were found to be most satisfying on a variety of measures was their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. In his review of the school effectiveness literature, Mackenzie (1983) also stressed the importance of adaptability, concluding that while effective schools are similar in many respects, their success appears to lie in their ability to "adopt multiple strategies in response to their particular needs and opportunities" (p. 5). In a similar vein McLaughlin and Marsh (1979) concluded that implementation of innovations was most successful when it was viewed as professional learning on the part of the school staff. They felt that this type of staff development is an adaptive, heuristic, long-term process that "must be tied to school-site program-building efforts" (p. 91). Mann (1978c) and Hawley (1981) support this position.

This apparent school-based nature of policy implementation presents "a persistent dilemma between the professional educators' legitimate claim to determine their own conditions of practice and the state's equally legitimate claim to guarantee public outcomes" (Mann, 1978a, p. xvii). Mann was referring to the implementation of state educational policy, but his argument holds true for national and local policy as well. In Lyttefield the implementation of the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies was controlled largely by the schools, with little monitoring and feedback by the district staff. Thus it was more a matter of chance than of design: if the interests of the school coincided with those of the Board, then effective implementation was possible; if the interests of the school did not coincide with those of the Board, then effective implementation was unlikely.

Without the deliberate intervention of the senior administrators at the school level, misinterpretation, symbolic compliance, cooptation, and even noncompliance are more likely to occur than mutual adaptation. The Principals' Meeting provided the district administrators with an appropriate forum for discussion of the two policies aimed at developing an understanding of the purpose of the policies and the implications for practice, that is, conceptual clarity. Instead a typical agenda included such items as the new requisition forms, what to do during the absence of the physical education coordinator, and government funding of immigrant children. This, in fact, was the agenda of the meeting at which the elementary school self-assessment policy was introduced. Even when the meeting was devoted to the community relations policy, discussion took place in small groups of principals and did not include senior administrators.

It seems, then, that success of policy implementation in a school district depends on the ability of the superintendent and his staff to encourage school-based and school-specific implementation activities but also to remain actively involved in the process at that level in order to monitor it and provide appropriate feedback. Consistent with this approach are the recommendations of Hargrove et al. (1981) that the district staff develop

> a coherent implementation strategy. The chief ingredient would be regular conversations between representatives of each group to consider all the schools in each district as schools, that is, as whole entities.... Schools should be accorded different treatment depending on performance levels.....Quantitative indexes are useful as benchmarks for success and as warning signs for lapses but they should be used sparingly." (p. 120)

Similarly, Fullan (1982) provides the following guidelines to the superintendent:

> Develop management capabilities of administrators - other district administrators and principals - to lead change....Directly and indirectly (e.g., through principals) provide resources, training, and the clear expectation that schools (teachers, principals, etc.) are the main units of change.... Develop with other administrators, school boards and teachers a clear procedure for dealing with change ... Monitoring the process is a never-ending requirement. (pp. 178-179)

The implementation of the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies in Lyttefield were not unique events, but reflected central office-school linkages in general. These linkages are the topic of the fourth research question.

RQ4. Local Contextual Conditions

The fourth research question concerns local contextual conditions that might influence the implementation process. It refers in particular to central office-school linkages.

Given the large, well-qualified, and capable district staff in Lyttefield, it is difficult to understand why the linkages between the central office and the schools are as weak as they are. The circumstances under which the Superintendent came to the district may have a bearing on this. At that time the relationship between the senior administrators and the employee groups was characterized by conflict and distrust, and many were concerned about the potentially damaging effect of this situation on the quality of education being offered. The Superintendent felt that he had to establish a more harmonious working relationship in the district. One of his solutions to the problem was to institute the participative policy development process described earlier. Another was to speak frequently of the need for collegiality and to urge the principals to involve teachers in school-level decision-making. In support of this, the senior administrators have made available to all principals and some teachers a short, intensive course on the clinical supervision model at district expense. These efforts were intended to diffuse the conflict, foster feelings of trust between the various parties, and promote a sense of common purpose, of working toward common goals.

At the present time there are none of the signs of conflict and distrust that were prevalent less than a decade ago. But this apparent tranquility may be due more to the avoidance of problems than to their resolution, a situation that both results from and contributes to weak central office-school linkages. The absence of any systematic monitoring procedures of school activities by the central office staff, the manner in which the Principals' Meetings are conducted, and the expectations that the school personnel have of the senior administrators all suggest that this is the case.

Lyttefield principals value their autonomy and frequently compare themselves favourably with colleagues in other districts in this respect. Yet most budget, program, and teacher assignment decisions are made centrally. In what sense, then, are Lyttefield principals autonomous? They describe themselves as "responsible for all the day-to-day decisions in the school", as "free to deal with parents and teachers as we think best", and in general as "running the show at the school". A common theme running through their descriptions is the lack of interference by central office staff in school activities.

The senior administrators, on the other hand, describe a good principal as a "district man". By this they meant someone who (a) completed all paper work (e.g., reports, forms, and the like) correctly and on time, and (b) did his or her share of district committee work. It appears as if the principals and district administrators have made a pact according to which the district administrators agree not to interfere in the school, the domain of the principals, if the principals agree to be cooperative and to support district initiatives. Regarded in this light, the absence of any systematic monitoring procedures is not surprising. First, monitoring would be interpreted as interference by the central office in school affairs. And second, monitoring would reveal that the compliance of the principals is more symbolic than real.

One consequence of the lack of monitoring is that it is impossible to assess the significance of the differences between schools. For example, that the four schools in the study had very different community relations programs was established in Chapter V. Were the schools responding to different parent expectations? Did parent satisfaction, both with the community relations program in particular and with the school in general, differ correspondingly? Did some of these programs represent truer implementation of the district policy than others? These important questions are unanswerable because the senior administrators have not ensured that the appropriate data were collected. Instead, their response to all such questions is that the schools in the district are "different, but equal". Yet even this assertion is difficult to support, because there are no data on student achievement, on student, parent, and teacher satisfaction, or on any indicator of school success. The assumption of equality seems to be based on the notion that since all the professionals are experienced and well-qualified, they must be doing a good job.

The manner in which the Principals' Meetings are conducted also suggest that central office-school linkages are weak. The agenda is set by the two Assistant Superintendents, a secondary principal, and an elementary principal from each of the three sectors. As we saw earlier, the items on the agenda are, for the most part, routine. The Assistant Superintendents chair the first part of the meeting, during which the agenda items are introduced and discussed. The major part of the meeting consists of the small work groups, however, and here the senior administrators have essentially an observational role. They move from group to group and listen to the discussion, but rarely become involved. The work groups are run by and for the principals. Thus the one opportunity the senior administrators have to clarify the purpose of district policy and discuss their implications for practice with the principals is lost. The Principals' Meetings are reminiscent of the staff meetings at Columbia rather than those at Thompson, that is, they seem to be more concerned with maintaining the status quo than with collegial activity focused on improvement.

The third indicator of the weak central office-school linkages is the expectations of the senior administrators held by the respondents. Principals, classroom-oriented teachers, and even school-oriented teachers to some extent, described the role of senior administrators in terms of services to school personnel. So, for example, the principal at Fraser spoke of the fact that his request for teachers who would help him bring about the changes he wanted to make was honored. Similarly, the Thompson principal cited the funds he was given for newsletters and other community relations activities. It was very important to teachers that they could telephone and be able to speak to a senior administrator if necessary. (The most frequently mentioned problem that would prompt a teacher to contact a senior administrator was a class size above the agreed-upon limits.)

All the respondents except one felt that Lyttefield was a good school district and said that they were glad to be working there. Their reasons were, in order of importance, (a) the good school-central office relationship, (b) the excellent teachers' resource center, and (c) the "lighthouse" teaching and learning conditions contract that had been negotiated. Nearly all the respondents were satisfied with conditions in the district, and they spoke highly of the senior administrators. But none referred to the senior administrators as leaders. Only the school-oriented teachers thought that it was important to have district policy and several, especially those who had worked on a policy development committee, expressed some concern about the lack of compliance with district policy. On the whole, however, the respondents described the activities of the senior administrators and their expectations of them in terms resembling those of classroom-oriented teachers for principals, with the emphasis on the managerial aspects of the role rather than the educational leadership aspects.

There have been relatively few studies of central office-school linkages. Two approaches to this issue seem useful in understanding events in Lyttefield, and both are based on Weick's (1976) notion of loose-coupling. The first conceptualizes education systems as organizational myths (see Meyer & Rowan, 1977 and 1978, and Rowan, 1981 for an elaboration of this theory). According to this perspective

> organizations whose structures become isomorphic with the myths of the institutional environment - in contrast with those primarily structured by the demands of technical production and exchange - decrease internal coordination and control in order to maintain legitimacy. In place of coordination, inspection, and evaluation, a logic of confidence and good faith is employed. (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341)

Thus school systems are coordinated by certification and categorization of persons and activities -- they specify who is qualified to teach what to whom. The system is maintained by the logic of confidence or faith that there are clear and commonly shared definitions of what should be happening at different grade levels and in different subject areas, and that all certified personnel adhere to these conventions. The district staff, then, certifies and categorizes, and demonstrates to the public that these activities are conducted according to its wishes. The school is thus free to conduct instruction as it deems appropriate for its specific circumstances. Meyer and Rowan argue that this loose-coupling allows the system to appear to be responding to a complex and fragmented environment while protecting the school from the disruptive effects of the environment. Metz (1981) utilized this conceptualization of educational systems to interpret events in one district.

This conceptualization of education systems does account for the weak central office-school linkages in Lyttefield. The argument for the beneficial effects of such loose-coupling, however, is itself based on a logic of confidence that schools are generally doing a good job. But it was shown earlier that this is not the case -- some schools are much more effective than others. Berman and McLaughlin's (1979) distinction between maintenance and developmental districts seems to be a more appropriate, and useful, way of conceptualizing the relationship between central office and schools, because it takes into consideration the responsibility of district administrators to promote the effectiveness of each school and to ensure compliance with district policy.

According to Berman and McLaughlin, maintenance districts are characterized by delivery uniformity, loose coupling and symbolic compliance, subordination of delivery concerns to political and bureaucratic concerns, closed boundaries, and a resistance to change. Developmental districts, on the other hand, are characterized by delivery diversity, integrated loose coupling, primacy of delivery concerns, boundary openness, and acceptance of the necessity of change. In maintenance districts implementation is not routinized but is in fact disruptive of daily routines; in developmental districts implementation is institutionalized, it is supported by existing norms and structures.

Clearly Lyttefield can be described as a maintenance district. Because central office-school linkages are weak, symbolic compliance and even non-compliance at the school level exists. As long as the senior administrators do not become actively involved in school level concerns, policy implementation will remain a matter of chance.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I examined the relationship between the central office and the schools in Lyttefield through the framework of the five research questions, and concluded that the effectiveness of policy implementation depends primarily on the extent to which school preferences and activities, and the thrust of the policy to be implemented, are mutually supportive. This is enhanced by the active involvement of the senior administrators at the school level. This is not the case in Lyttefield, and so implementation is essentially a matter of chance.

CHAPTER IX

A SCHOOL-BASED MODEL OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN A SCHOOL DISTRICT

In the previous chapter I summarized the study findings within the framework of the five research questions and analysed them from the perspective of central office-school linkages. In this chapter I first attempts to interpret and explain the findings in terms of each of the three conceptualizations of policy implementation described in the second chapter. Next I argue that the cultural-evolutionary model is better able to account for the findings than the other two, given that the focus of the study is implementation activities at the school level and the influence of the school board and the central office on these activities. Finally I propose a model of policy implementation in a school district and a corresponding set of propositions that can be tested by future research. The proposed model is grounded in the data, and it is derived from the cultural-evolutionary perspective.

The Findings From Three Perspectives

The purpose of this section is to interpret and explain the study findings from each of the three perspectives of policy implementation described in Chapter II. Each perspective emphasizes different actors and different events, explains the same data differently, and accounts for some data ignored or inconsistent with the assumptions of the other two.

Classical or Technological Perspective

Several features of the implementation of the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies in Lyttefield are consistent with the classical or technological perspective. These include the central role of the policy, the assumptions of the School Board members in particular concerning authoritative relationships in the district, and the implementation strategies employed by the senior administrators.

That the change process is thought by both Board members and senior administrators to be policy-dominated rather than implementation-dominated is suggested by the disproportionate amount of time expended on developing the policy as opposed to planning and monitoring its implementation. For example, the Board devoted many hours over a three month period refining the draft of the community relations policy, but did not spend any time on considering how it should be implemented or what specific changes would be made as a result of the policy. Furthermore, when the Board perceived that the schools were reluctant to establish parent advisory committees, its response was to create another policy making these committees mandatory. Similarly, all efforts concerning the elementary school self-assessment policy over a two-and-a-half year period centered on developing the policy and accompanying booklets. In fact, the

Superintendent instructed the schools to delay any self-assessment activities until the district policy and assessment instruments were available. These Board and senior administrator actions not only suggest that the policy itself is the focal point of the change process, but also that policy making and policy implementation are bounded and sequential activities.

The Board members were entirely responsible for the community relations policy, but were not involved in the development of the elementary school self-assessment policy except in approving it. Regardless of their role in the development of the policy, however, they played a very limited role in its implementation. The Board members expected the Superintendent and his staff to oversee the implementation process, and they expected the principals and teachers, as employees of the Board, to comply with the policy. When the Board felt that the schools were not implementing the community relations policy as it wished, it instructed the Superintendent on several occasions to make its views known to the schools, and finally passed another more specific policy. In like manner the senior administrators conveyed information to the principals, with the expectation that they would secure the compliance of the teachers. These Board and senior administrator actions suggest a belief in the hierarchical structure of school district organization, and in a common value system between policy makers and policy implementers. In fact, senior administrators frequently refer to a cooperative principal as a "district man".

The senior administrators introduced both the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies by distributing copies to the principals with a request that they consider the implications for their school with the staff. In the case of the former this was followed by a workshop attended by the principal and one teacher from each school. The senior administrators had planned to hold a workshop to explain the latter, before they decided to postpone implementation indefinitely. The Board, too, has advocated the use of workshops. When the principals were slow to establish parent advisory councils, even after these had been mandated, the Board suggested that a workshop be held to train them for the task. These implementation strategies fit into the rational-empirical classification, and suggest that the Board and the senior administrators consider policy implementation to be essentially a rational and technical process, a matter of providing the implementers with the appropriate information and with training in the required skills.

The classical or technological model, then, can account for certain aspects of the implementation of the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies in Lyttefield, including the heavy investment in rational-empirical implementation strategies and the assumption of an hierarchical structure. It also predicts the existence of an effective monitoring system, but this was not the case in Lyttefield -- the Board had to rely on the self-reports of the principals to assess progress in implementing the community relations policy. The model, however, does not deal with two issues thar proved important to policy implementation in Lyttefield. The first was inability of the Board to secure compliance with the policy -- three years after parent advisory councils had been made mandatory twenty percent of the schools still did not have one. The second was the lack of relationship between policy specificity and implementer conceptual clarity -- few of the respondents understood how parent advisory councils were supposed to work or what they were supposed to accomplish. The other two perspectives are better able to account for these findings.

Political Perspective

The objections raised by district employee groups to the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies, their relationship with the Board and the senior administrators, and their desire to be involved in the policy making process are best accounted for by the political perspective.

All actors in the district resented what they considered to be an intrusion into their domain, and they accused the "intruders" of being politically rather than educationally motivated. For example, the School Board felt that the Ministry directive requiring an elementary school self-assessment policy was an infringement on local autonomy, while the Teachers Association and many of the respondents looked upon it as an attempt by the Government to "score points with the voters" and to remove some teachers. The principals and teachers were reluctant to establish the mandated parent advisory councils because (a) this policy dictated the kind of relationship the school was to have with the community, and (b) it increased the likelihood of public interference in matters of professional concern. They felt that the Board created the policy as a vote-getting device rather than because of its value to the educational enterprise.

These examples of implementer reactions to the policies demonstrate that their cooperation cannot be assumed and that the legal authority of the policy makers is not sufficient to ensure compliance. Negotiation and bargaining become important activities in the implementation process. For example, many respondents summarized their concerns in the form: "If they [i.e., the Board or the senior administrators] want us to do __________, then they have to give us __________," where the second blank was generally fewer teaching hours and more pay. Similarly, the central office staff used the buy-sell analogy when describing policy implementation — they have to "sell" schools on the idea and the schools have to "buy into" the idea if implementation is to be successful. The senior administrators feel that they have little direct influence on what happens in the schools, that they have to rely on persuasion rather than the manipulation of sanctions and rewards. Their commitment to participative decision-making also inclines them to favour persuasion. In the implementation of the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies, workshops and Principals' Meetings provided opportunities for persuasion.

The study findings most consistent with the political perspective, however, are those concerning events preceding adoption of the policy rather than those following it. The involvement of implementers in policy development is an issue of particular concern. The recent history of the district helps to explain this.

When the current Superintendent first came to Lyttefield, the relationship between the district and its employee groups was characterized by conflict and distrust. He and his staff established a district decision-making structure that ensured participation of all employee groups in the development of any policy that would affect them, and they encouraged principals to involve teachers in school-level decision-making. These measures were taken in order to reduce conflict and to increase trust among district employees. Principals, however, were not included in the development of the community relations policy, and this, according to the respondents, was one of the major reasons for their resistance to it. The elementary school self-assessment policy, on the other hand, was developed by a committee consisting of central office staff, principals, and teachers selected by their respective groups to represent its interests. This was in keeping with district norms for participative decision-making and for democratic procedures.

These policy development processes assume that all participants are operating within the same general value framework, that is, that it is possible to arrive at a mutually satisfactory decision. These also recognize that each group has its own specific interests and goals that it is trying to protect and promote. The employee groups find it to their advantage to make their concerns known during the policy development process instead of trying to make changes after the policy has been adopted; the senior administrators find it to their advantage to accommodate employee concerns during policy making rather than during policy implementation. This suggests that the processes of policy making and policy implementation are closely intertwined, with the policy resulting from the negotiations and compromises of the policy makers and policy implementers.

Nor do these activities stop once the policy has been adopted. For example, when the Board expressed concern about school-level implementation of the community relations policy, a special all-day Principals' Meeting concluded that the most important school community relations activity is the individual parent-teacher relationship and that the best P. R. for a school is a happy child. The implication was that the activities suggested by the Board (e.g., newsletters and parent advisory councils) would not be as effective as those the schools were doing already. Also, the principals argued for, and won, more administrative time on the basis of the extra work demanded by implementation of the elementary school self-assessment policy, even though implementation was postponed indefinitely. Thus policy implementation appears to be highly political and interactive in nature.

The absence of any systematic monitoring system in the district can be seen as the result of a compromise between the central office and the principals: the central office agrees not to interfere in the school, the domain of the principals, and the principals agree to cooperate and to support district initiatives. Of course the compliance of the principals is often more symbolic than real, but there are none of the signs of conflict and distrust that characterized the district less than a decade ago. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Lyttefield principals value their autonomy and frequently compare themselves favourably with their colleagues in other districts in this respect, in spite of the fact that most budget, program, and teacher assignment decisions are made centrally. It is also supported by the fact that the senior administrators agree that they would never have had an elementary school self-assessment policy if it had not been mandated by the Ministry, nor are they in a hurry to implement the one they have.

The political model, then, can account for certain aspects of the implementation of the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies in Lyttefield, particularly the activities of groups of actors at the district level, their reasons for resisting the policies, and their desire to control the policy process during both development and implementation. It fails, however, to account for the considerable variation among schools in the implementation of the community relations policy and the resistance to the elementary school self-assessment policy, in spite of the process by which it was developed. The third perspective is better able to account for these findings.

Cultural or Evolutionary Perspective

The aspects of the implementation of the community relations and elementary school self-assessment policies best accounted for by the cultural or evolutionary perspective include the resistance of school personnel to these policies, the school-specific nature of policy implementation, and the ineffectiveness of district policy implementation strategies.

Implementer cooperation is not ensured by the involvement of representatives of employee groups on the policy development committee. For example, principals and teachers still resisted the elementary school self-assessment policy, in spite of the efforts of the committee to anticipate their concerns. Few of the objections of the respondents to the community relations and the elementary school self-assessment policies were based on their intrinsic characteristics. It was their effect on established relationships and procedures, on the work environment of the school, that was controversial. So, for example, many respondents criticized the policies on the grounds that implementation requires considerable time and other resources for which no provisions have been made. Thus they saw policy implementation as taking time away from teaching and consequently they felt it has a potentially negative effect on student achievement. Some respondents believed that community relations and school self-assessment are not the responsibilities of teachers; others, that schools are already doing a good job in these areas. In either case, they did not perceive a need for the policies and this increased their resistance to them. Moreover, these two policies concerned the implementers' relationship with parents and other community members in one case, and with their colleagues in the other. These are matters about which the respondents felt deeply and had strong opinions. The more the policy challenged or threatened established patterns, the greater the resistance to it.

These findings suggest that the beliefs and values of the implementers are an important factor in policy implementation, particularly whether or not the implementers perceive a need for the policy and whether or not they perceive a compatibility between the assumptions of the policy concerning the implementation environment and their own. It is not just the beliefs and values of implementers as individuals that is important, however, but the differences between the beliefs and values of groups of actors within the district.

All the respondents differentiated themselves from other groups of actors in the district. Board members expressed bewilderment at the resistance of the schools to their requests and a helpness to make the desired changes happen. The incumbent members said they had learned that change occurs very slowly, but did not understand why this had to be. The central office staff described themselves as the men in the middle, feeling a commitment to both the Board members and the school personnel, and trying to help each understand the other's perspective. Principals and teachers expressed resentment at the interference of others and the disruptive effect this had on their teaching. They could not understand why others would not let them get on with the job they were hired to do. These sentiments suggest that the school district does not represent a single culture. Instead, the Board members, the central office staff, and the school personnel appear to belong to different subcultures, all linked by their involvement in education but separated by their specific goals and interests.

Nor can all school personnel be considered unitary subculture. The four schools in the study had distinctly different community relations programs, and the diversity and comprehensiveness of these programs was related to the extent to which the staff shared the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, to the balance of school-oriented and classroom-oriented teachers on the staff, and to the principal's leadership style. In sum, each school appeared to be a separate subculture. One of the reasons for the relative lack of success of policy implementation efforts in a school district may be because the Board and the central office staff treat the school personnel as if they were indeed a single subculture. The Lyttefield senior administrators frequently described the schools as "different but equal"; the Board members explained that the policy mandating parent advisory councils was intentionally vague so as to allow each school to establish a council suited to its circumstances; and the elementary school self-assessment committee was concerned throughout their deliberations that the policy be sufficiently flexible to permit schools to adapt it to their needs. These actions indicate a recognition of the uniqueness of each school. Yet the implementation strategies are directed toward all schools equally and uniformly, as if implementation were expected to proceed along the same paths in each.

Another inadequacy of these implementation strategies is their failure to distinguish policy specificity from conceptual clarity. The schools in the study that were developing the most comprehensive and diverse community relations programs were those whose staffs discussed the reasons for having such a program, its consistency with the school philosophy and other practices, its implications for practice, and the like. They were developing an understanding of the purpose and meaning of community relations that arose from their attempts to implement plans and that was specific to their context. Similarly the elementary school self-assessment committee devoted most of its time trying to conceptualize what was meant by self-assessment and what its purpose was. The actual writing of the policy and the assessment instruments took relatively little time. Both these examples demonstrate that developing conceptual clarity is a difficult and time-consuming task, but that it is a necessary component of meaningful policy implementation.

The Lyttefield senior administrators utilized implementation strategies that disseminated information about the policy and provided training in specific tasks required by the policy (e.g., how to write a newsletter or how to organize a parent advisory council), but that ignored the issue of conceptual clarity. Furthermore, they were not involved in implementation at the school level unless the school requested some help. Thus the schools were not forced to develop conceptual clarity about the policy, and those that did received no feedback about the correspondence between their conceptualization and that of the originators of the policy. Only if district staff work directly with the schools, monitoring their implementation of the policy but recognizing their need to adapt the policy to their specific circumstances, is meaningful policy implementation likely. But this assumes trust and a sense of common purpose between the various groups of actors in the district. Such is not the case in Lyttefield, so that diversity in school policy implementation is largely due to cooptation and symbolic compliance rather than to mutual adaptation.

Summary

Each of the three perspectives of policy implementation illuminated different aspects of the findings. The classical or technological perspective accounted for the disproportionate amount of time and effort invested in policy development as opposed to policy implementation, and for the use of such implementation strategies as the dissemination of information and workshops. The political model, on the other hand, accounted for the resistance of district employee groups to the policies, their relationship to the Board and the district administrators, and their desire to control the policy process. Finally, the cultural or evolutionary perspective accounted for the school-specific nature of community relations activities, the general resistance of school personnel to district policy, and the relative ineffectiveness of district implementation strategies.

Each perspective also seemed to describe policy implementation from the point of view of a different set of actors. The classical or technological perspective most closely resembled the process as seen by the School Board members, or more accurately, as they seem to wish it would proceed. The political perspective corresponded to the views of the senior administrators and the district employee groups. The cultural or evolutionary perspective paralleled the point of view of school staffs. As the purpose of this study is to describe how the schools respond to district policy and how their responses are influenced by the Board and senior administrators, the third perspective proved to be the most appropriate. It guided the development of the data-based model of policy implementation described in the next section.

A Model of Policy Implementation in a School District

Viewing the findings from the three perspectives of implementation proved useful in gaining a more complete and integrated understanding of the process of policy implementation in a school district. It also helped in the formulation of a model that is grounded in the data. The model can be summarized in the form of a set of propositions and corollaries:

PROP. 1 - The policy-in-practice is determined primarily by school practices, that is, by what the school actually does to implement the policy.

- COR. 1 - Policy implementation is school-based and school-specific.
- COR. 2 - Policy implementation is context-dependent and time-dependent.
- COR. 3 - The change process is implementation-dominated rather than policy-dominated

PROP. 2 - School practices are influenced by the policy-as-adopted, that is, by the authoritative policy statement.

COR. 1 - The initial response of the school to the policy depends on the perceived congruence or compatibility between the school's values and beliefs and those espoused by the policy.

COR. 2 - If the initial response is acceptance, then implementation efforts are likely to be characterized by clarification, which leads to mutual adaptation.

COR. 3 - If the initial response is nonacceptance, then implementation efforts are likely to be characterized by reinterpretation, which leads to symbolize compliance or cooptation, or by rejection, which leads to noncompliance.

PROP. 3 - School practices are determined largely by school characteristics.

COR. 1 - The staff norms of collegiality and continuous improvement are important school characteristics.

COR. 2 - The principal's leadership style is an important school characteristic.

COR. 3 - The predominant teacher ethos (i.e., school orientation or classroom orientation) is an important school characteristic.

PROP. 4 - School practices are influenced by district practices.

COR. 1 - District administrators influence school practice directly by the implementation strategies they utilize.

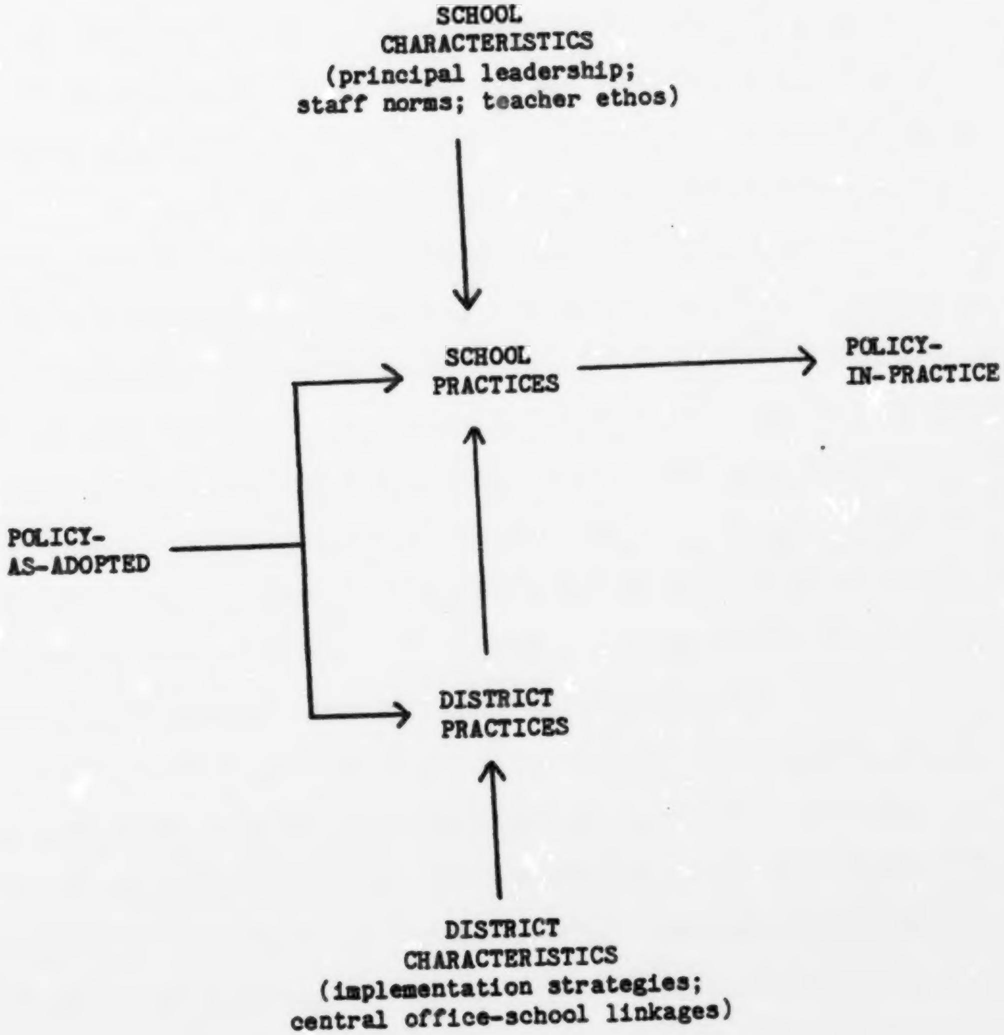
COR. 2 - District administrators influence school practice indirectly through established central office-school linkages.

Figure 9-1 presents a schematic overview of the model.

Before proceeding with an explanation of the model, it is necessary to identify two major limitations. First, the model describes implementation of what Berman (1980) calls adaptive policies. The process might be different for programmed policies -- in that case, the policy-as-adopted would probably exert far more influence on school practices, and school characteristics, far less. Second, some relationships have been omitted in the interests of simplicity. For example, the model isolates the process of policy implementation from the processes of policy making and policy evaluation, yet there is evidence in the findings of the interconnected nature of these three processes. For example, the trustees informally monitored the implementation of the community relations policy by the schools, concluded that the schools were reluctant to establish parent advisory councils, and so made such councils mandatory. With these limitations in mind, let us consider the model

Figure 9-1

A Model of Policy Implementation in a
School District - An Overview


SCHOOL
CHARACTERISTICS
(principal leadership;
staff norms; teacher ethos)
SCHOOL
PRACTICES
POLICY-
IN-PRACTICE
POLICY-
AS-ADOPTED
DISTRICT
PRACTICES
DISTRICT
CHARACTERISTICS
(implementation strategies;
central office-school linkages)

in more detail.

Proposition 1

A clear distinction must be made between policy and practice. The policy-as-adopted is defined by the policy statement, and it embodies district expectations for school practice with respect to a particular issue. The policy-in-practice is defined by what actually occurs at the school level in response to the policy-as-adopted. Thus the policy-in-practice is school-based and school-specific, and diversity rather than uniformity is to be expected. For example, each of the four schools in the study had a very distinctive community relations program, one that bore some relationship to the policy statement (that is, the policy-as-adopted) but that could not be predicted from the policy statement. In other words, the policy-as-adopted is not a perfect guide to the policy-inpractice. It maps out the area in a general way and sets up expectations about what will be found, but the terrain cannot be fully known without visiting it.

Not only do schools differ in implementation activities at any one time, but each school's activities develop over time in response to changing circumstances. For example, the Thompson community advisory council assumed greater responsibility and exerted more initiative as it developed self-confidence and awareness of what it could accomplish. The principal and the community coordinator adjusted their leadership role correspondingly, and the staff is having to redefine its relationship with the council. Policy implementation is essentially an adaptive response of the school to both the policy and the context, and so is dynamic rather than static. The policy may stimulate the change process, but it is what happens during implementation that gives it character. It is in this sense that the change process is implementation-dominated rather than policy-dominated.

Proposition 2

Implementation is a school-based and school-specific process, but it is influenced by the policy-as-adopted, that is, by the authoritative policy statement. For example, each of the schools had a distinctive community relations program, but they all concerned the school's contact with the community and they did share common elements (e.g., warm, welcoming atmosphere; written communications; school-initiated contacts; and teacher-initiated contacts).

The school's implementation activities, then, are a response to the policy statement, a response that depends primarily on the perceived congruence or compatibility between the school's values and beliefs and those espoused by the policy. If there is perceived compatibility, then the school's initial response is acceptance. The teachers attempt to understand the meaning and purpose of the policy, and its operational objectives for their particular circumstances. In other words, implementation is characterized by clarification and mutual adaptation. The implementation efforts of the Thompson staff and of the recently transferred teachers at Fraser with respect to the community relations policy illustrate these processes. The attempts of the elementary school self-assessment committee to achieve conceptual clarity and to adapt the Ministry's materials to local conditions provide examples at the district level.

Conversely, if the school perceives the policy values and beliefs to be incompatible with its own, its initial response is nonacceptance. The staff may then reject the policy on a variety of grounds and so refuse to comply with it. The reluctance of many schools to establish parent advisory councils illustrates noncompliance. Another response to perceived incompatibility, and probably a more common one, is reinterpretation of the policy. In some cases the school may address the letter rather than the spirit of the policy. The Columbia parent advisory council exemplifies such symbolic compliance. The insistence of the senior administrators that all Circular 92 demands is the establishment of a policy on elementary school self-assessment, not actual engagement in the process, typifies symbolic compliance at the district level. In other cases the school may interpret the policy in such a way that its established practices satisfy the requirements of the policy. For example, the Columbia staff, and those of Fraser and Lyttefield under the previous administrators, concluded, without the benefit of a critical assessment of their practices, that no changes were needed in their community relations programs as a result of the community relations policy. That this view was shared by many other staffs is suggested by the proclamation of a Principals' Meeting held at that time that the individual parent-teacher relationship is the most important school community relations activity and that a happy child is the best P. R. This is an example of a sort of passive cooptation of the policy. The principals' use of the elementary school self-assessment policy to gain more administrative time, even though there is reason to believe that they have little commitment to the notion of self-assessment, is an example of active cooptation.

Figure 9-2 summarizes proposition 2 in schematic form.

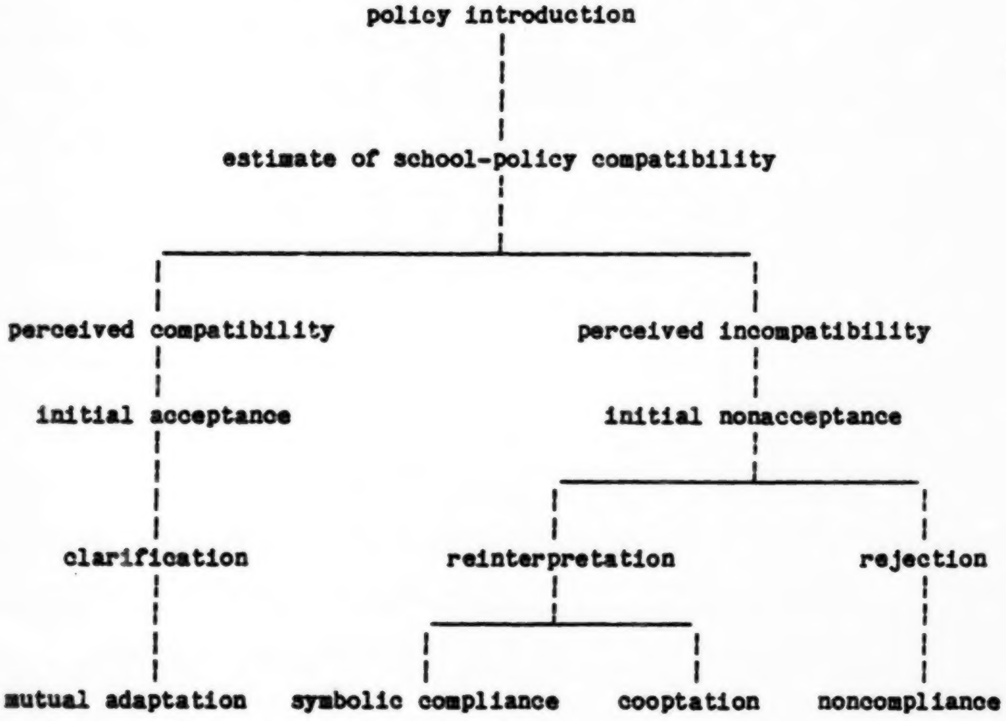
Proposition 3

District policy elicits a response from the school, and constrains the substantive nature of that response. So, for example, the district community relations policy directed the schools to consider the types and frequency of their contacts with parents and other community members. But schools differ considerably in their implementation of a policy, and this depends to a large extent on such school-based factors as the principal's leadership style, the staff norms of collegiality and continuous improvement, and the orientation of the teachers to either the school or the classroom.

Principals influence implementation first and foremost by their manner of introducing it to the staff. They are the sole source of information about the policy for many of the teachers, and so are

Figure 9-2

A Model of Policy Implementation in a
School District - School-Policy Compatibility


policy introduction
estimate of school-policy compatibility
perceived compatibility
perceived incompatibility
initial acceptance
initial nonacceptance
clarification
reinterpretation
rejection
mutual adaptation
symbolic compliance
cooptation
noncompliance

largely responsible for their attitude toward and understanding of it. Principals also communicate their degree of support for the policy to the staff, which cues the teachers as to the amount of attention they should pay to it. For example, the Thompson principal regarded the community relations policy to be of high priority, and he ensured that the teachers considered its implications for both school and classroom practice. The Columbia principal, on the other hand, believed (a) that the policy was merely a confirmation of ongoing practice and (b) that the relationship between parent and teachers was the concern of the individual teacher. He therefore did not initiate staff discussion on this topic.

The way the principals handle any particular policy is not a unconstrained, but it reflects general school structures and procedures for problem-solving that are embodied in the staff norms of collegiality and continuous improvement. Staffs that are collegial and concerned about improving their practices are prepared to understand the purpose and meaning of a policy, and its operational objectives for their particular circumstances. The extent to which a staff shares the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement depends on the principal's belief in them and his or her attempts to establish structures and expectations that encourage and support their development. The Thompson, Fraser, and Lyttefield principals believe that staff collaboration is an essential component of successful school problem-solving, and they utilize staff committees, staff meetings, and professional days to this end. These structures are well-established at Thompson, which has managed to develop a diverse and comprehensive community relations program. The Columbia staff has an individualistic and fragmentary approach to problem-solving, and there is little evidence of the impact of the community relations policy at that school.

The extent to which the staff shares the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement also depends on teacher ethos. Teachers who are school-oriented are willing to collaborate with their colleagues to solve common problems and to improve school practice. Moreover, they are receptive to district and school policy. Classroom-oriented teachers, on the other hand, prefer to work on their own and on classroom concerns. They are not receptive to district or school policy. In this study the proportion of teachers on the staff who were school-oriented was related both to the extent to which the staff shared the norms of collegiality and continuous improvement and to the diversity and comprehensiveness of the school's community relations program.

Proposition 4

As important as school-based factors are to the process of policy implementation, district practices do exert an influence as well. Senior administrators have a direct effect on school implementation activities through the implementation strategies they utilize. The more these strategies encourage clarification and mutual adaptation, the more successful implementation is. The Lyttefield senior administrators relied primarily on distribution of copies of the policy and a workshop for two representatives from each school as a means of guiding school implementation activities. While these strategies did provide information and training in specific skills, they did not help the school personnel to develop an understanding of the meaning and purpose of the policy nor to consider its implications for practice. The senior administrators were very willing to meet the requests of schools for help, but they did not monitor what was happening at the school level nor did they become actively involved in school implementation activities. Consequently, the schools could implement the policy or not as they wished, and even schools that did make sincere efforts to implement the policy received no feedback on the degree of correspondence between their interpretations and practices and those intended by the policy originators. The tendency of Board and district community relations activities to favour public relations over public involvement and the provision of information over seeking input may have influenced school implementation activities more than did the district implementation strategies.

The relationship between the senior administrators and school personnel during policy implementation is a reflection of general central office-school linkages. If there is a sense of common purpose which emphasizes the delivery of service, and if senior administrators encourage schools to be adaptive while providing them with appropriate feedback, then structures and procedures that facilitate clarification and mutual adaptation are already in place. Policy implementation is part of ongoing daily life in the district rather than a disruption of routines. Such was not the case in Lyttefield, which resembled the maintenance districts described by Berman and McLaughlin (1979).

Chapter Summary

Each of the three major conceptualizations of policy implementation illuminated different aspects of the findings, and described policy implementation from the perspective of a different set of actors. The classical or technological model, which corresponded to the perspective of the School Board members, accounted for the emphasis on policy development rather than on policy implementation and for the use of rational-empirical implementation strategies. The political model, which corresponded to the perspective of the senior administrators and district employee groups, explained the resistance of district employee groups to the policy, their relationship to the Board and senior administrators, and their desire to control the policy process. The cultural or evolutionary model, which corresponded to the perspective of the school, accounted for the school differences in policy implementation, the general resistance of school personnel to district policy, and the relative ineffectiveness of district implementation strategies.

A data-based model of policy implementation in a school district was derived from this latter perspective. Essentially it argues that the policy statement (i.e., the policy-as-adopted) and school practice with respect to the policy (i.e., the policy-in-practice) are distinct but interrelated entities. The policy statement does elicit a response from the schools and it does constrain the substantive nature of their response, but school-based factors as the principal's leadership style, the orientation of the teachers, and staff norms are the most important determinants of school practice. The senior administrators influence school implementation activities directly, through the implementation strategies they utilize, and indirectly, through the central office-school linkages they establish. These linkages determine the state of preparedness of the schools for policy implementation, and thus whether policy implementation is an integral part of school life or a disruption of its routines.

APPENDIX A

Introductory Materials Mailed to Participants

A1. Letter to Central Office Staff

Dear

As part of my graduate work in education at Simon Fraser University, I am investigating policy implementation in a school district. Lyttefield School District is cooperating by permitting me to conduct the research project there, and its policies on elementary school self-assessment and on public information and community relations are the two policies selected for study. As you are involved in the implementation of these policies and thus can provide firsthand information about them, I would like you to be a participant in this research project.

Please read the attached document, which describes in more detail the purpose of the study and the nature of your involvement in it. If you agree to participate, please sign the enclosed consent form. I will contact you in the near future to answer any questions you may have about the project and to arrange a time and place for our first meeting. You can return the signed consent form to me at that meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda LaRocque

Encls.

A2. Letter to ESSA Committee Members

Dear

As part of my graduate work at Simon Fraser University, I am investigating policy implementation in a school district. Lyttefield School District is cooperating by permitting me to conduct the research project there, and its policy on elementary school self-assessment is one of the policies selected for study. As you are involved in the implementation of this policy and thus can provide firsthand information about it, I would like you to be a participant in this research project.

Please read the attached document, which describes in more detail the purpose of the study and the nature of your involvement in it. If you agree to participate, please sign the enclosed consent form. I will contact you in the near future to answer any questions you may have about the project and to arrange a time and place for our first meeting. You can return the signed consent form to me at that meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda LaRocque

Encls.

A3. Letter to School Trustees

Dear

As part of my graduate work in education at Simon Fraser University, I am investigating policy implementation in a school district. Lyttefield School District has cooperated by permitting me to conduct the research project there. You may remember that Dr. Austin introduced me to the Board last spring, saying at that time that I hoped to be able to talk to the Board members about policy implementation at the end of the study.

I am now working on the final report, and I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss policy implementation with you from the perspective of the Trustee. The interview will probably require about an hour of your time.

Please read the attached document, which describes in more detail the purpose of the study and the collection and use of the data. If you are willing to participate in the interview, please sign the enclosed consent form. I will telephone you in the near future to arrange the time and place of the interview. You can return the signed consent form to me when we meet.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda LaRocque

Encl.

A4. Letter to Principals & Teachers

Dear

As part of my graduate work in education at Simon Fraser University, I am investigating policy implementation in a school district. I am particularly interested in describing this process from the perspective of the teacher, who is, in most cases, the policy implementer.

Lyttefield School District is cooperating by permitting me to conduct the research project here. Your principal may have told you that I would be asking some of the teachers at this school to participate in the study. This would involve meeting with me for about half an hour to discuss the teacher's role in the implementation of the District's community relations policy, with perhaps a brief subsequent meeting to verify the findings and to react to the interpretations. I would also like to discuss the proposed elementary school self-assessment policy with those who teach in elementary schools.

Please read the enclosed document, which describes the study in more detail, and the consent form, which outlines the rights of participants. I will be telephoning you in the near future to answer any questions you may have about the project and to arrange a convenient time and place for us to meet. If you agree to participate, you can return the signed consent form to me at that meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda LaRocque

Encls.

A5. Study Description

A STUDY OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
IN A SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

Linda LaRocque, Ph.D. Candidate

Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

PROBLEM STATEMENT & RATIONALE

Recent research suggests that policy implementation is a more complex process than it was originally thought to be, and that the activities of policy implementers have an important impact on policy outcomes. The purpose of this study, then, is to describe and explain the process of policy implementation in a school district, as seen from the perspectives of the various participants. The two policies selected for study are: the elementary school self-assessment policy and the policy on public information and community relations.

The findings of this study will contribute to theory through the development of a model of policy implementation which identifies the significant variables and describes their interrelationships. This model will also be of value to practitioners who must plan for and direct the policy implementation process.

DATA COLLECTION

1. purpose

The purpose is to collect detailed information about the implementation of the two policies under study; for example, what problems or issues arose and how did they arise; what decisions were made and why; who was involved and in what way; and the like.

2. participants

Participants include school board members, central office staff, principals, teachers, and, in the case of the second policy, parents. Interviews and observations will be scheduled in advance, at mutually convenient times.

3. interviews

The major data collecting method is interviewing. Principals and teachers at each of the participating schools will be interviewed twice, once at the beginning of the study and once again towards the end. Throughout the period of data collection, however, there will be brief informal encounters in which the participants will be asked questions arising from the observations and from other interviews. School board members, central office staff, and parents will probably be interviewed only once, towards the end of the study.

4. observations

A secondary data collection method is observation. Observations will take place at board meetings, at meetings during which the policies and their implementation are discussed, and on occasions when participants are actually implementing the policies. The purpose of these observations is to gather information not readily accessible through interviewing and to validate the interview data.

5. other collection methods

Document analysis and possibly questionnaires will also be used.

6. duration

Data will be collected from February, 1982 to July, 1982. It may be necessary to talk to some of the participants during the fall of 1982, however, in order to clarify some points, fill in gaps in the information, etc.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following conditions will be observed:

1. participation is voluntary and participants must sign a consent form indicating they understand the purpose of the study and what their involvement entails;
2. participation may be withdrawn, partially or fully, at any time;
3. the confidentiality of personal information will be protected, both during the study and after its completion;

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS (Continued)

4. no data which may jeopardize a person's position in the district will be used;
5. the central office and participating schools will be provided with a copy of the summary report of the study, upon its completion.

Simon Fraser University subscribes to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of the participants. This form and the attached document are given to you for your protection, so that you may fully understand the procedures involved. Your signature on this form will ensure that you have received all information necessary to give a truly informed consent to your participation in this study.

A6. CONSENT FORM

Having been asked by Linda LaRocque of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project, I have read the procedures specified in the document entitled "A study of policy implementation in a school district."

I understand the procedures to be used in this project and what my involvement entails.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that it may be withdrawn at any time at my request, and that all personal information is confidential.

I also understand that I may register any complaint that I might have about the study with Linda LaRocque or with Dr. Jaap Tuinman, Director of Graduate Programs, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University.

A copy of the results of the study will be made available, upon its completion, to the central office and to each of the participating schools.

I agree to participate in the interviews and observations as described in the document stipulated above, during the period February, 1982 to July, 1982.

NAME (please print) ______________________________

SIGNATURE ______________________________

DATE ______________________________

APPENDIX B

Interview Guides

B1. School Trustees & Central Office Staff

COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICY

Background & Development (to be asked of people in the district at the time)

First I would like to ask you a few questions about the background and development of the CR policy.

- Why was the policy proposed when it was? What events led up to its introduction?

- What 'problem' was the policy intended to 'solve'?

Policy Implementation (to be asked of people in the district at the time)

Now I would like to ask you about the implementation of the policy, the steps taken to bring about the desired changes.

- What was the first change to follow approval of the policy? Why was this done? How was the change brought about? Who was involved and in what capacity?

- What other changes followed approval of the policy? Why were they done? How were they brought about? Who was involved and in what capacity?

- How did you in your role of ________________ monitor and guide activities to see that they proceeded in the desired directions?

- The terms 'community relations' and 'public relations' are used frequently. Are they interchangeable or do they imply something different?

- A close connection between CR activities and the community education program seems to have developed in recent years. Why is that? What is the relationship between the two programs?

Policy Intent (to be asked of people not in the district during the development of the policy)

I would like to ask you a few questions about the CR policy and its implementation.

- First, to your knowledge, what is the intent of the CR policy? What does it attempt to accomplish?
- The terms 'community relations' and 'public relations' are used frequently. Are they interchangeable or do they imply something different?
- A close connection between CR activities and the community education program seems to have developed in recent years. Why is that? What is the relationship between the two programs?

Current Implementatio

You have identified various aspects of the CR policy - public access to information, public input, and public support.

- What does the Board do to ensure each of these?
- In your role of ___________, what is the nature of your contact with the public?

Policy Impact

Now that we have discussed the policy intent and implementation, I would like to ask you about its impact and success.

- How would you assess the impact of the policy? Has it been successful?
- On what basis do you make this judgment? Has there been an assessment of the policy? If so, how was it carried out?
- Are there any changes you would like to see in the way the policy is being implemented?

Community Relations Committee

The CRC seems to have played a role in the implementation of the CR policy.

(to those not on the CRC)

- What is the purpose of the CRC? What is it intended to do?

(to those on the CRC)

- Why did you choose to be a member of the CRC?
- What is the purpose of the CRC?
- What are its main activities?
- Is there anything about the operation of the CRC you would like to see changed?

School Parent Advisory Committee

The establishment of PACs was alluded to in the CR policy, and now there is a policy mandating them.

- Why did this issue become so important?
- The policy is open and vague. Why is this? What is the policy intended to do?
- The Board has asked for three assessments of the PACs. Why? What was intended by these assessments?
- In what way can the Board and CO staff monitor and control the schools' implementation of PACs? How can you influence what happens at the school level?

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT POLICY

Policy Development

Now I would like to switch from the CR policy to the ESSA policy.

- This policy was developed in a way quite different from that by which the CR policy was developed, especially in the extent of Board involvement. Why was that?

- Which pattern is more typical? Why is that?

- When the policy came to the Board for approval, several trustees made derogratory remarks, and the general tone suggested that the Board was not enthusiastic about the policy even though they approved it. Why was that?

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN GENERAL

Board/Central Office Role

Finally, I would like to ask you about policy implementation in general.

- In what ways can you make your views known to principals and teachers? How can you influence them?

- In what ways can you monitor and guide policy implementation? Compared to all the responsibilities entailed by your role, what is the relative importance of policy implementation? How much of your time is spent on policy implementation?

- In my talks with people in the district, certain phrases have been repeated frequently: you can't mandate (legislate) change; you can't lay things on; principals in this district are autonomous. Do you believe these comments accurately reflect conditions in the district? Why do these conditions exist and how do they affect implementation efforts?

B2. Elementary School Self-Assessment Committee

Committee Formation

To begin, I would like to ask you a few questions about how the committee was formed and how you came to be a member of it.

- How did you first hear about the committee?
- Why did you decide to join the committee? What was your interest in it?
- How did you feel about ESSA at that time? Have your attitudes changed since then? Why is that?
- How did you get on the committee?

Committee Operation

Next I would like to ask you about how the committee worked.

- Is there a chairman? How was he selected? What is his role?
- How did the committee define its task? What did it intend to do?
- What procedures were established to carry out the task?
- How are decisions made?
- The members of the committee were selected to represent different viewpoints or interests. Have there in fact been differences? If so, how were they reconciled?

Committee Concerns

Now I would like to talk about the major issues or concerns the committee had to deal with.

- What is the major issue the committee has dealt with? What is it considered important? How is the committee resolving the issue?
- What other issues is the committee dealing with? Why are they considered important? How are they being resolved?

(probes: philosophy; climate; the community; a model of ESSA; flexibility; staggered cycle; external examiner; booklet format; response type)

Implementation

Next I would like to talk about the implementation of the policy

- What is the committee's role in the implementation?

- What plans for implementation have been made?

Committee Progress

Finally, I would like to ask you about your assessment of the committee's progress.

- What has the committee accomplished to date?

- What does the committee have left to do?

B3. Principals & Teachers

COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICY

School's CR Activities

I would like to ask you a few questions about the CR activities at this school. For the moment, let's consider any contact between the school and the community as a community relations activity.

- First, would you list some of the school's CR activities which have taken place this year?
- Which of these activities do you consider to be most important? Why is that?
- Are there any other activities which you consider to be particularly important? Why is that?

  (repeat until all important activities have been discussed)

- Would you like the number and the variety of such activities to increase, decrease, or remain the same? Why is that?

Individual's CR Activities

Next I would like to focus for a moment on some of your individual contacts with the community.

- Can you tell me about the occasions on which you have had contact with the parents of your students this year? (probes: frequency, nature, purpose, ...)
- Would you like to see the number of such contacts increase, decrease, or remain the same? Why is that?
- What, from your point of view, characterizes a good parent-teacher relationship?

Parent/Community Input

Most of the activities we have been talking about so far involve the school reaching out to the parents or the community in general. Now I would like to talk about the ways in which parents of the community have input in the decisions of the school.

- Have there been any occasions on which parents or the community have had input on matters concerning the school? Can you tell me about these occasions?

- Can you tell me about an occasion on which this input has been particularly useful?

- Have there been any occasions on which input was not useful?

- Are there any areas where you feel there should be parent/community input or where input should be increased? Why is that?

- Are there any areas where you feel there should be no parent/community input or where it should be decreased? Why is that?

General Attitudes Towards the CR Policy

- Teachers differ in the extent to which they believe that CR activities are important. How do you feel about this issue?

- In what ways can CR affect the school? the teacher?

History of the Implementation of the CR Policy

Up to this point we have been discussing the school's CR activities as they exist now. I would like to try to trace how these activities developed.

- For example, when did _____ begin? Do you recall how it began, who suggested it, ...?

  (repeat for all the important CR activities described earlier)

- Has there been any change in attitude towards CR at this school during the last five years or so?

  (if "yes") Can you describe the change? How did it arise?

  (if "no") Have there been any staff meetings or Pro-D days devoted to CR? Has there been an increase in contacts between the school and the home?

(continue probing until it is clear that the interviewee cannot recall any change)

- Has there been any change in attitude towards CR at the district level over the last five years or so?

  (if "yes") ...

  (if "no") ...

- The elected Board of School Trustees has passed two policies related to CR. Are you familiar with these policies? How did you become aware of them?

- How did they affect the school or you as a teacher when they were passed?

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT POLICY

When I was planning this study, it was thought that implementation of the ESSA policy would have begun by now. Due to various circumstances, this has not happened. Nevertheless, I am interested in hearing your initial reactions to the proposed policy.

- When did you first learn that the district was working on this policy?

- What were your thoughts about it at that time? Why was that?

- Do you feel differently about it now? Why is that?

- Have you seen the proposed policy?

  (probes: when, how, what was said, ...)

- What do you think will be the most important benefit of implementing this policy? Why is that?

- Will there be other benefits?

- Do you foresee any difficulties in implementing this policy? Why is that?

- Can you think of any others?

- What is the Board's/CO's attitude to ESSA? How do you know that?

GENERAL INFORMATION

The School

As I mentioned earlier, the distinctive character of a school may have an important impact on policy implementation.

- Some people think that it is important that schools have a set of common goals and written policies that promote these goals. Others feel that it is important that schools be loosely organized, with emphasis on teacher autonomy. How do you feel about this issue? Why is that?

- In your opinion, what makes the principal a good leader?

- In your opinion, what makes a fellow teacher a good colleague?

- In your opinion, what makes a school "a good place to work in"

Board/Central Office - School Relationship

The district school system is composed of an elected Board of Trustees, a central office staff, and schools. I would like to talk about how these groups work together for a moment.

- Some people think that it is important that a school district have a set of common goals and written policies to promote these goals. Others feel that the district should be loosely organized, with emphasis on school autonomy. How do you feel about this issue? Why is that?

- What has the Board/CO done recently that has had a significant impact on the school? How was that change brought about? Anything else?

- Has there been an occasion when you have not agreed with a district policy? What did you do?
- How do you know when the Board/CO feels strongly about an issue? Can you give me an example?
- In your opinion, what is the responsibility of the Board and the CO to the school, and vice versa?

Background Information

In closing (or: Before we begin), I would like to ask you a few questions about your teaching career.

- How long have you been teaching?
- Has all of this been in Lyttefield School District?
- How many years have you been at this school?
- Why did you decide to transfer to this school?

> You have taught in several schools. Do you think it is helpful to a teacher to transfer periodically?

or

> You have taught at this school for some time now. Do you think it is helpful to a teacher to remain at the same school for many years?

APPENDIX C

Chronologies of Implementation Events

Table C-1

Chronology of the Development of the Community Relations Policy

Date	Event
77-01-05	Lyttefield Parent-Teacher Council requested that information about Board members, Board meetings and procedures for bringing matters to the Board's attention be disseminated to the public
77-01-07	Trustee Roberts distributed draft of policy to other Board members (party campaign issue)
77-01-11	at the inaugural Board meeting, Roberts was made Chairman both of the Board and of the Community Relations Committee, and both the policy draft and the letter from the Parent-Teacher Council were referred to the committee of the whole
77-01-13	Superintendent suggested that the policy be redrafted in the form of preamble, policy statements, and objectives; committee of the whole accepted the suggestion
77-01-19	Superintendent distributed the policy redraft to the Board members and suggested that they consider means of implementing the policy
77-02-09	at a meeting of the committee of the whole, the preamble and policy statement were accepted, and some of the objectives were changed; implementation was not discussed
77-02-17	committee of the whole recommended that the Board approve the policy
77-02-22	the Board approved the policy

Table C-2

Chronology of Implementation of Policy Objectives Related to
Aspect of Public Involvement: Obtaining Information
Level of Activity: Board/District

Date	Event
77-01	schedule of Board meetings established and publicised.
77-03 & 04	Board approved a statement of procedures regarding public question period and requests for information
77-04-03	CRC expressed satisfaction with manner in which district staff had made themselves available for interviews & panels
77-04-04	CRC requested Superintendent to provide the community television network with list of topics for possible programs
77-06-05	CRC approved newsletter; Superintendent reported that the community television programming and brochures would be available in the fall
77-09-05	Superintendent reported to CRC that a publications committee and a productions committee had been formed, to help improve implementation of these activities
77-11-16	these two committees met to discuss direction they would take
77-11-28	publications committee requested submissions for newsletter
77-12-14	Superintendent informed publications committee that Board hoped to issue newsletter in January
79-01-30	Superintendent reported to CRC that the slide-tape presentation on special services, the brochures, the newsletter, and the school tax information inserts were being prepared, and that a sound system for the Board room was being prepared

Table C-2 (Continued)

Date	Event
79-04-02	CRC approved brochures, discussed distribution of agendas and attached materials, discussed new releases of Board decisions, and asked Superintendent to approach the community television network
79-05-07	CRC approved newsletter and discussed its distribution, and reviewed the slide-tape presentation
79-05-22	Board approved Superintendent's recommendations to include "communications and community relations" under the mandate of the community education department and to add a staff member for Sept. 1, 1979
79-10-15	CRC approved the newsletter, the official logo, and the community relations committee budget, which included funding for Board and school newsletters, brochures, and a feasibility study of programming on the community television network
79-12-03	CRC recommended feasibility study re programming on the community television network
80-02-04	CRC decided to have 3 issues of the newsletter yearly and that tax notices should point out that the school district is a distinct entity from the Corporation of Lyttefield; the CR Coordinator reported that the new brochures would soon be ready
80-03-03	CR Coordinator reported that the next issue of the newsletter was in preparation, that informational "clips" on education in Lyttefield to appear on community television were being prepared, that the brochures were in press, that the district logo was being used, that the tax inserts had been prepared, and that the Coordinator was being used as a resource person by the schools (publications; parent committees); CRC suggested that there be a clipping service and visible recognition of "Volunteers Week".

Table C-2 (Continued)

Date	Event
80-03-11	memo from Superintendent to CR Coordinator asking him to "set priorities and establish time-lines" with respect to the activities the CRC suggested
80-06-10	CRC requested the CR Coordinator to develop a proposal re recognition of retiring employees; CRC informed of date of next newsletter
80-09-15	CRC approved items of next newsletter, received the proposal concerning recognition of retiring employees; CRC asked CR Coordinator to pursue community television programming, to prepare process for students to attend Board meetings, and to examine district signs to ensure that they encourage the public to approach the Board
81-06-01	CRC approved the staff retirement recognition proposal, and decided to inform the public about school taxes through inserts with the tax notices and in the newsletter
81-12-16	CRC discussed items for the next newsletter (which has been postponed to include an article about the effects of the provincial restraint program), was informed that the new brochures were in print, and asked the CR Coordinator to resume publication of "Board Notes"
82-02-08	CRC approved the community television pilot project, asked that Board Briefs be resumed, received copies of the new brochures, and established regular meeting times

Note. CRC = Community Relations Committee

Table C-3

Chronology of the Implementation of Policy Objectives Related to Aspect of Public Involvement: Influencing Decisions
Level of Activity: Board/District

Date	Event
77-04	procedural by-law allowing delegations was passed.
79-06-22	public meeting on utilization of surplus space
80-03-03	CRC asked staff to develop process for students to attend Board meetings and share with Board members some of the programs going on in their schools; CRC was informed of plans for Teens in Education conference to be held in the fall
80-06-10	CRC informed of progress in planning Teens in Education conference
80-09-15	CRC again asked staff about having students attend Board meetings
81-01-05	CRC asked staff about having students attend Board meetings
81-spring	3 public meetings on school consolidation/closure in sector 2
82-spring	2 public meetings to discuss the closing of five schools
83-03	First meeting of the District School Council Committee

Note. CRC = Community Relations Committee

Table C-4

Chronology of the Implementation of Policy Objectives Related to Aspect of Public Involvement: Obtaining Information
Level of Activity: School

Date	Event
77-03-24	Superintendent sent a copy of the community relations policy and a memo to all schools, requesting that they consider the policy, review their public relations activities in light of the policy, and discuss the implementation of the policy
77-10-26	Superintendent reported to the board that at a recent principals' meeting "... public relations was recognized as being a relatively high priority. 'What do you do well?' was identified as a catch-phrase to influence greater attention to conveying positive messages
79-01-26	Superintendent sent memo to all principals summarizing recent principals' meeting; two items emphasized the need to convey to the public what the school is doing to meet community expectations - "The best PR is a satisfied child"
79-01-30	CRC asked Superintendent to "again encourage schools to emphasize public relations and to maintain an active program of informing the community of school activities"
80-02-04	CRC asked Superintendent to devise means to provide schools with resources for activities related to public relations
80-02-11	Superintendent asked some of his staff to follow up on this request
80-02	workshops on community relations for principals and teachers

Note. CRC = Community Relations Committee

Table C-5

Chronology of the Implementation of Policy Objectives Related to Aspect of Public Involvement: Influencing Decisions
Level of Activity: School

Date	Event
77-03-22	principals received a copy of the policy and were requested by the Superintendent to discuss its implementation with the staff
77-10-11	Board endorsed community advisory councils at the school level and asked staff to pursue the development of these councils
79-04-10	Board approved the recommendation of the CRC that the Superintendent prepare a report on the status of parent involvement groups at the school level
79-05-22	Deputy Superintendent presented report to the board; superintendent suggested that chairman and vice-chairman attend the monthly luncheon with the presidents of Lyttefield Association of School Administrators and Lyttefield Teachers Association to make their views known and made the arrangements
79-06-07	as a consequence of the luncheon, LASA and LTA planned to hold joint executive meetings in the fall to discuss parent advisory councils
79-09-05	Deputy Superintendent reported to Board his intent to plan inservice activities to help principals and staffs establish parent advisory committees
79-11-13	Board approved the CRC recommendation that the superintendent sent bulletin to all principals informing them of the March 30, 1980 deadline for establishing parent involvement groups
79-12-05	all-day principals' meeting on parent involvement groups
80-03-22	Board approved the policy on parent involvement groups at all schools

Table C-5 (Continued)

Date	Event
80-03-30	deadline for establishment of parent involvement groups at all schools
80-12-12	Board requested written reports on the parent involvement groups from each school; Superintendent sent memo to the principals informing them of this request
81-01-13	CRC recommended that workshops on community relations, especially parent advisory councils, be provided for principals and teachers
81-01-23	deadline for written reports on parent involvement groups
81-01	workshops were being planned; cancelled due to CUPE strike
82-02-16	Board approved CRC recommendation that another survey of parent involvement groups be done
82-02-23	Superintendent informed principals of the recommendation
82-03-28	deadline for submission of reports on parent advisory council

Note. CRC = Community Relations Committee

Table C-6

Chronology of Implementation of Ministry Directive Concerning Elementary School Self-Assessment

Date	Participants	Event
79-08-20	memo from the Ministry of Education to all districts (Circular 92)	required districts to establish a policy on elementary school self-assessment by December 1981
79-10-09	report from the Superintendent to the Board	advised the board of Circular 92 and of the district's response.
79-10-11	memo from the Superintendent to his staff	informed them of Circular No. 92 and asked them to consider the composition of the committee
79-11-05	letter from the Superintendent to the Presidents of the Lyttefield Teachers Association and the Lyttefield Association of School Administrators	informed them of the composition of the committee and asked them to select their 3 representatives to it
79-11-16	memo from the Ministry of Education to all school districts	re-assured the districts of the low-key nature of the elementary school self-assessment process
79-12-05	memo from the Ministry of Education to all school districts	reminded the districts of the December 31, 1981 deadline
80-01-31	ESSA committee	meeting #1
80-02-20	ESSA committee	meeting #2
80-03-05	ESSA committee	meeting #3
80-03-17	ESSA committee	meeting #4

Table C-6 (Continued)

Date	Participants	Event
80-04-17	ESSA committee	meeting #5
80-09-28	ESSA committee	meeting #6
80-11-07	ESSA committee	meeting #7
80-11-19	ESSA committee	subcommittees formed to prepare the various sections of the assessment materials
80-12-23	memo from the Ministry of Education to all the school districts	informed districts that the previously distributed materials were being revised
81-01-27	ESSA committee	meeting #8
81-02-10	ESSA committee	meeting #9
81-02-26	ESSA committee	meetings postponed due to CUPE strike
81-05-20	ESSA committee	meetings postponed due to central office representatives involvement with staffing decisions
81-09	from the Ministry of Education to all schools	sent revised materials to all schools
81-09-30	ESSA committee	meeting #10
81-12-03 81-12-04	by the Ministry of Education for representatives from each district	provincial workshop on elementary school self-assessment
81-12-10	ESSA committee	meeting #11

Table C-6 (Continued)

Date	Participants	Event
82-01-20	ESSA committee	meeting #12
82-02-25	ESSA committee	meeting #13
82-03-22	memo from the Superintedent to all principals, the President of the LTA, and the President of the LASA	asked them to provide feedback on the policy draft
82-03-25	ESSA committee	meeting posponed due to central office representatives involvement with restraint program decisions
82-06-08	School Board	approved the Elementary School Self-Assessment policy
82-06-09	memo from the Superintendent to all principals	distributed copies of policy for placement in policy book
82-09-30	Superintendent and his staff	indefinitely postponed the district workshop on elementary school self-assessment, and consequently implementation of the policy, due to the restraint program
82-09-09	memo from the Ministry of Education to all school districts	informed them that implementation of elementary school self-assessment would be indefinitely postponed due to the restraint program

Note. ESSA = elementary school self-assessment

APPENDIX D

Samples of School Newsletters and Bulletins

Appendix D-1

Example of a Multitopic Bulletin

COLUMBIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

82-02-12

Dear Parents:

PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING

This is just a reminder that the Parent council will be holding an evening meeting on

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1982
at
7:00 p.m. in the GYM

for the benefit of those interested parents who are unable to attend the usual morning meetings. In addition to the regular business portion of the meeting, Miss ___________ will present a workshop (including a demonstration by some of the students) on the ORFF Music Programme introduced to Columbia this year.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

February 17th - All Lyttefield schools will be closed so that teachers may involve themselves with various Professional Development programs held throughout Lyttefield schools.

March 3rd - Columbia Elementary School will be closed to enable teachers to consider your child's achievement, to confer with other staff members, and for professional development programs.

SPRING BREAK

Spring Break this year will be from April 5th to April 12, 1982. The last day of school will be Friday, April 2nd and we will return on Tuesday, April 13th.

Appendix D-1 (Continued)

HOURS OF ATTENDANCE - Grades 1-7

Following a September, 1981 notice of motion regarding a consistent dismissal time for all elementary school (1-7) students, the School Board requested a survey and input, and received considerable representation on this matter. At the regular Board meeting of 1982-01-26 the Board approved the following motion:

"That the hours of attendance for Grade One pupils be the same as for the other elementary school grade pupils, effective, September, 1982."

Yours truly,
(signature)
Principal

Appendix D-2

Example of a Single Topic Bulletin

FRASER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

P #60
1982-01-25

We are grateful for the interest shown in the past by parents in our Fraser School Parent Association and for the service provided by its members. Parents and guardians who are informed and committed to their children's education, can and do make a difference to the quality of learning -- both at home and at school. We would like very much to reactivate our parent group and to increase participation and areas of involvement.

A school community organization can enable parents and staff members to consider together such topics as:

a) School philosophy and program priorities.
b) School rules and student conduct.
c) Curriculum offerings and new instructional programs.
d) Safety programs and procedures.
e) The identification of unique community needs and resources.
f) Appropriate school evaluation.
g) Methods needed to ensure racial and cultural understanding.
h) Improving school community relations.
i) School use outside of school hours.
j) Promoting voter participation in school board elections.

This is your opportunity for input. It can be fun and rewarding. Please consider being involved -- we need you!

We are asking everyone to return the following reply so that we can have confirmation that you did receive this notice.

I can not take part in the Fraser School Community Association. ____

Appendix D-2 (Continued)

I am interested in being on the Fraser School Community Association. _____

The most convenient time for me to meet is:
evening _____ morning _____ afternoon _____

TELEPHONE:________________ NAME: ____________________

Appendix D-3

Example of a Columbia Classroom Bulletin

October 8, 1981.

Dear Parent

_____________ is planning a trip to Lyttefield Ice Rink for her class. They plan to leave the school at 8:45 h on Thursday, October 15 and return by 10:15 h. Transportation will be by parents. The donation of 60 cents covers skate rental. Parent drivers and helpers are needed. Please indicate below if you can help.

If you wish your son/daughter to attend this field trip, please complete the form below and return it along with 60 cents to __________ on or before October 15th.

(signature)
Principal

Appendix D-4

Example of a Thompson Clasroom Bulletin

May 21, 1982

Dear Parent,

As part of their science program the students of Divisions 10 and 11 are planning to go on a field trip to Lyttefield Lake to study pond water on Wednesday June 1 from 9:30 - 2:00.

We were wondering if any parents would be willing to drive the children to the lake and then transport them back to the school. The parents do not necessarily have to stay at the lake but would be most welcome to. If you are willing to drive and are able to meet the insurance requirements would you please indicate below how many seat belts you have.

Thank you,
(signatures of both teachers)

Appendix D-5

Excerpt from a Thompson Newsletter

Our regular daily program serves the needs of close to 300 children from Kindergarten to Year 5. Numerous extracurricular activities (various sports, clubs, and two choirs) and an exciting library program are available to all students. As I have stated in the past, I believe we have a good school with competent, dedicated teachers and happy students, and I trust the school will continue to flourish as the staff and parents work mutually towards meeting the academic and social needs of the children of the community.

Also, I would like you to know that I remain convinced of the importance of the basic skills and I will undertake to see they continue to be taught well.

Good physical education, music, drama and art programs are also essential, but are never taught at the expense of the three R's. Indeed, progress in the basic skills is usually enhanced when such skills are part of a well balanced cultural-recreational program.

I believe that our school should be a humane and happy place for your children, not however, a place where, "If it feels good, do it". Rather, school should be a place where, "If I do your job well, it feels good". Happiness for children as for us, comes from a job well done and the sense of accomplishment which follows.

Appendix D-6

Excerpt from a Lyttefield Newsletter

Counsellors, the Principal and Vice-Principal, and other members of the staff are available for discussions about any problems which your son or daughter is having. Please feel free to call and make an appointment at a time which is mutually convenient.

We would also appreciate receiving comments, either in writing or by telephone, regarding our new computerized report cards. Do you find that you receive more information than with the old style reports? Are the comments adequate? Is there further information which could be added for next year?

If you have any ideas, please let us know!

Appendix D-7

Example of a Fraser Classroom Bulletin

Dear Parents:

As you know I have been working to provide a fifth grade program of studies for your children over the last few weeks.

We seem to be working well together and the classroom climate has been positive, so I feel the time has come to invite you to visit our classroom.

The date planned is ____________. This is to be a friendly and informal gathering so you can meet me as well as other parents. Your children are invited to join you so they can show you some of their work.

Looking forward to seeing you,

(signature of the teacher)

Appendix D-8

Example of a Fraser Classroom Bulletin

Report Cards and Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conference Day was a long but gratifying day for me. I was delighted with the opportunity to meet with all but one of the parents of the children in Division I. I hope you found your child's report card and our chance to chat informative. The next report card is a long way off. Please feel free to call at any time if you have a concern about any aspect of the program or your child's progress. I would like to hear from you.

Lyttefield Recreation Centre

Our trips to the Centre have given us a chance to practice using the microfiche catalogue in the library and to work with clay in the pottery room. The class has thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity and we wish to express our special thanks to __________. Without you we simply could not take advantage of these resources on a regular basis. Our Wednesday afternoons for the month of December will be taken up with Christmas Art projects at the school. We will resume our trips to the Centre for racquetball lessons in January.

Socials: History of Fraser School

We are attempting as a class to trace the history of Fraser School in Socials this term. This is proving more difficult than we at first expected. If you know anyone who might help you child find such things as when the school was built, who the principals were, how the programs and building have changed, your assistance would be appreciated.

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